147

NETWORK

Written by Paddy Chayefsky

1976

FADE IN:

1. BLACK SCREEN 1.

NARRATOR
This story is about Howard Beale who was the network news anchorman on UBS-TV --

A BANK OF FOUR COLOR TELEVISION MONITORS

It is 7:14 P.M., Monday, September 23, 1974, and we are watching the network news programs on CBS, NBC, ABC and UBS-TV, the network of our story. The AUDIO is OFF; and head shots of WALTER CRONKITE, JOHN CHANCELLOR, HOWARD K. SMITH and HARRY REASONER, and, of course, the anchorman of our network, HOWARD BEALE, silently flit and flicker across the four television screens, interspersed with the news of the day -- a hurricane in Honduras, Teddy Kennedy renounces his candidacy for President, Kissinger will address the UN General Assembly tomorrow on the energy crisis. NARRATION continues OVER --

NARRATOR (Contd)
-- In his time, Howard Beale had been a mandarin of television, the grand old man of news, with a HUT rating of 16 and a 28 audience share --

CAMERA MOVES IN to isolate HOWARD BEALE, who is everything an anchorman should be -- 58 years old, silver-haired, magisterial, dignified to the point of divinity. NARRATION continues OVER --

NARRATOR (Contd)
-- In 1969, however, he fell to a 22 share, and, by 1972, he was down to a 15 share. In 1973, his wife died, and he was left a childless widower with an 8 rating and a 12 share. He became morose and isolated, began to drink heavily, and, on September 23, 1974, he was fired, effective in two weeks. The news was broken to him by Max Schumacher --

2. EXT: 5TH AVE. SOUTH OF 57TH STREET - NIGHT 2.

11:30 P.M. The area is deserted except for a few STROLLERS window-shopping the department stores. And way down near 55th Street, TWO roaring drunk middle-aged men, HOWARD BEALE and MAX SCHUMACHER, reeling along and hooting it up. NARRATION continues OVER --

NARRATOR (Contd)
-- who was president of the News Division at UBS and an old friend. The two men got properly pissed --

CLOSER SHOT of HOWARD and MAX (who is a craggy, lumbering, rough-hewn, 51-year-old man), thoroughly plastered and on a drunken laughing jag --

HOWARD
(clutching the corner mailbox to keep from falling)
When was this?

MAX
1951 --

HOWARD
I was at CBS with Ed Murrow in 1951. Didn't you join Murrow in 1951? --

MAX
Must've been 1950 then. I was at NBC. Morning News. Associate producer. I was a kid, twenty-six years old. Anyway, they were building the lower level on the George Washington Bridge, and we were doing a remote there. Except nobody told me! --

For some reason, this knocks them out. HOWARD, wheezing with suppressed laughter, clutches the mailbox. MAX has to shout to get the rest of the story out --

MAX (Contd)
-- ten after seven in the morning -- I get a call -- "Where the hell are you? -- You're supposed to be on the George Washington Bridge!" -- I jump out of bed -- I throw my raincoat over my pajamas -- I run down the stairs -- I get out in the street -- I flag a cab -- I jump in -- I say: "Take me to the middle of the George Washington Bridge!" --

It's too much again. The TWO MEN dissolve into silent wheezing spasms of laughter --

MAX (Contd)
(tears streaming down his cheeks)
-- the driver turns around -- he says -- don't do it, buddy --
(so weak now he can barely talk)
-- he says -- you're a young man -- you got your whole life ahead of you --

He can't go on. He stomps around on the sidewalk. HOWARD clutches the mailbox.

3. INT: A BAR - 3:00 A.M. 3.

Any bar. Mostly empty. MAX and HOWARD in a booth, so sodden drunk they are sober --

HOWARD
I'm going to kill myself --

MAX
Oh, shit, Howard --

HOWARD
I'm going to blow my brains out right on the air, right in the middle of the seven o'clock news, like that girl in Florida a couple of months ago --

MAX
You'll get a hell of a rating, I'll tell you that, a fifty share easy --

HOWARD
You think so?

MAX
We could make a series out of it. Suicide of the Week. Hell, why limit ourselves? Execution of the Week -- the Madame Defarge Show! Every Sunday night, bring your knitting and watch somebody get guillotined, hung, electrocuted, gassed. For a logo, we'll have some brute with a black hood over his head. Think of the spinoffs -- Rape of the Week --

HOWARD
(beginning to get caught up in the idea)
Terrorist of the Week? --

MAX
Beautiful!

HOWARD
How about Coliseum '74? Every week we throw some Christians to the lions! --

MAX
Fantastic! The Death Hour! I love it! Suicides, assassinations, mad bombers, Mafia hitmen, murder in the barbershop, human sacrifices in witches' covens, automobile smashups. The Death Hour! A great Sunday night show for the whole family. We'll wipe Disney right off the air --

They snigger and snort. HOWARD lays his head down on the booth's table and verges on sleep --

4. INT: HOWARD'S BEDROOM - 4:30 A.M. - DARK 4.

HOWARD, fully clothed, sprawled asleep on his still-covered bed in the dark bedroom. Suddenly, he sits bolt upright, SCREAMING out against unseen terrors --

5. INT: HOWARD'S APARTMENT HOUSE - LANDING 5.
OUTSIDE HIS DOOR - 8:00 A.M. - TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

-- as HOWARD'S HOUSEKEEPER, a middle-aged lady, lets herself into --

INT: HOWARD'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE FOYER

The HOUSEKEEPER, unbuttoning her coat, is greeted by the sound of a raucous clock ALARM, relentlessly BUZZING o.s. She crosses the --

INT: LIVING ROOM

-- and opens the blinds letting in an eruption of daylight. The shrill BUZZING getting louder, she proceeds into the --

INT: BACK FOYER

-- where she pauses to look into the bedroom, the door being ajar; the BUZZING is coming from here --

HOUSEKEEPER'S P.O.V. -- HOWARD BEALE,

still wearing the clothes he wore last night, curled in a position of fetal helplessness on the floor in the far corner of the room --

HOUSEKEEPER
(after a moment)
Are you all right, Mr. Beale?

HOWARD
(opens one eye)
I'm fine, thank you, Mrs. Merryman --

With some effort, he contrives to get to his feet as the HOUSEKEEPER crosses to the alarm clock and turns it off --

6. CREDITS AND MUSIC ERUPT ONTO THE SCREEN 6.

TITLE:

" N E T W O R K "

UNDER AND INTERSPERSED WITH CREDITS, a montage of scenes, occasionally audible, on this seemingly routine day --

7. INT: HOWARD BEALE'S OFFICE - 5TH FLOOR - 9:20 A.M. 7.

A small, unpretentious office, cluttered with books, magazines, periodicals, photographs and awards on the walls, various mementoes here and there. HOWARD (necktied and in shirtsleeves), behind his desk, rattling away his copy for that evening's broadcast on his typewriter -- pauses to pour himself a quick shot of Scotch --

8. INT: THE NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM - ROOM 517 - 10:30 A.M. 8.

The common room off which Howard's office debouches. A large room compactly filled with the desks of producers, associate producers, head writer and writers, production assistants, etc. The walls are festooned like bulletin boards with sheaves of newspaper pages and cutouts and reams of wire releases (there are two wire machines in a corner). Large blowups of HOWARD BEALE are prominently displayed. There are small, shelved libraries of books, directories and magazines here and there. And the ever-present bank of four television monitors; and, since it is 10:30 A.M., Tuesday, September 24, 1974,

and, since the AUDIO is OFF, the screens silently flicker with whatever was on that day at that time. HOWARD comes out of his office, crosses through the general HUM of informal industry, an occasional TYPEWRITER CLACKING, a more than occasional phone ringing, as the Nightly News Room PERSONNEL, all in their 20's and 30's, move, MURMUR, confer about their businesses. HOWARD BEALE makes for a ledge of reference books to check out some fact. He spreads the reference book out on an unoccupied desk. SOMEONE in b.g. tells him he's wanted on the phone. He nods, takes the call at the desk he is at. Throughout, he belts away at his glass of booze --

9. INT: OFFICE OF THE EXEC. PRODUCER OF UBS-NETWORK NEWS - UBS BUILDING - 5TH FLOOR - 1:00 P.M. - TUESDAY 9.

Another smallish office debouching off the main room like Howard's, absolutely jammed with nine PEOPLE, a couple of them standing, the others sitting wherever they can. The executive producer, HARRY HUNTER (early 40's), is behind the desk. HOWARD BEALE sits on the small, Finnish modern couch, flanked by an ASSOCIATE PRODUCER and a MAN from the Graphics Department. Aside from BEALE and HUNTER, everybody else is in their 20's or early 30's, and, with the same exceptions, they are all casually dressed. This is the daily run-down meeting at which the schedule for that evening's broadcast is roughed out, and it sounds something like this --

HOWARD
(reaching for the bottle of booze on HUNTER's desk to refill his glass)
-- let's do Rockefeller at the end of two --

HARRY HUNTER
That strong enough to bump?

HOWARD
(sipping his booze)
In one then, I'll do a lead to Ford-Kissinger --

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Then Yamani?

HOWARD
Yeah, Yamani in Chicago -- tag --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (GIRL)
That's forty-five --

HOWARD
What does that come out?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
About four-fifty --

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Where we using Rumsfeld?

HARRY HUNTER
Let's do that in two -- Rumsfeld -- Rockefeller -- bump. Now, we using a map going into L.A.?

GRAPHIC MAN
I prefer a news-pix --

HOWARD pours himself another shot of booze and sips it --

HOWARD
What've we got left?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Nuclear thing, Nixon-hospital, Ford amnesty, Watergate trial --

10. INT: 4TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - UBS BUILDING - 6:28 P.M. - TUESDAY 10.

LOOKING INTO the small network-news make-up room where HOWARD BEALE is standing, Kleenex tucked into his shirt collar, getting a few last whisks from the MAKE-UP LADY. Finished, HOWARD pulls the Kleenex from his collar, takes a last sip from a glass of booze on the make-up shelf, gathers his papers and exits, turns and enters --

11. INT: NETWORK NEWS STUDIO - 4TH FLOOR 11.

Typical Newsroom studio -- cameras, cables, wall maps, flats and propping, etc. HOWARD nods, smiles to various PERSONNEL -- CAMERAMEN, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS -- as he makes his way to his desk facing Camera One. He sits, prepares his papers, looks up to the control room, nods --

MUSIC ABRUPTLY OUT:

END OF CREDITS:

12. INT: CONTROL ROOM - 4TH FLOOR 12.

The wall clock reads: 6:39. Typical control room. A room-length double bank of television monitors

including two color monitor screens, the show monitor and the pre-set monitor. Before this array of TV screens sits the DIRECTOR, flanked on his left by the PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (GIRL), who stop-watches the show, and on his right by the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR who operates a special board of buttons and knobs. (On the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR's right sits the LIGHTING DIRECTOR.) At the moment, the show monitor has the network's Washington correspondent, JACK SNOWDEN, doing a lead-in to the second day of Nelson Rockefeller's hearings before the Senate Rules Committee on his nomination for the Vice-Presidency --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
-- Rockefeller again supported President Ford's pardon of former President Nixon --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(murmuring into his mike)
-- twenty-four --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
-- as an act of conscience --

DIRECTOR
(murmuring into his mike)
-- Lou, kick that little thing shut on ground level --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
-- an act of compassion --

The show monitor screen has switched over to show film of Nelson Rockefeller testifying before the Rules Committee --

SNOWDEN (V.O. ON MONITOR)
-- and an act of courage --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(murmurs)
-- forty seconds --

DIRECTOR
(murmurs into mike)
-- twenty seconds to one --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- The constitutional process worked --

DIRECTOR
-- headroll -- rolling --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- the information was brought out --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(murmurs into mike)
-- twenty-five, twenty-six --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- the President resigned --

In the back half of the control room, seated behind his shelf is HARRY HUNTER, who is flirting with his SECRETARY --

HARRY HUNTER
(to SECRETARY)
How the hell do you always get mixed up with married men? --

DIRECTOR
(leans back to say to SECRETARY)
-- Sheila, if you're hot for married men, why go to strangers? What's wrong with me? --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- the President accepted a pardon --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
-- ten seconds --

DIRECTOR
(back to his mike)
-- ten seconds coming to one --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- which, in my opinion --

DIRECTOR
(on mike)
-- and --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- was tantamount to admitting guilt --

DIRECTOR
-- one --

HOWARD BEALE's image suddenly flips on-screen --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
-- fifteen seconds to commercial freeze --

DIRECTOR
-- head roll --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
-- rolling --

The DIRECTOR and TECHNICAL DIRECTOR turn in their seats to join HARRY HUNTER and his SECRETARY in a brief gossip --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- Ladies and gentlemen, I would like at this moment to announce that I will be retiring from this program in two weeks' time because of poor ratings --

The DIRECTOR has whispered something to HARRY HUNTER'S SECRETARY which occasions sniggers from the SECRETARY and from HARRY HUNTER. The TECHNICAL DIRECTOR stands to get in on the joke --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(to DIRECTOR)
-- what'd you say? --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- and since this show was the only thing I had going for me in my life, I have decided to kill myself --

HARRY HUNTER'S SECRETARY murmurs something which causes HARRY HUNTER to burst into laughter --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(to the DIRECTOR)
-- so what'd she say? --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to blow my brains out right on this program a week from today --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(frowning and very puzzled indeed by this diversion from the script)
-- ten seconds to commercial freeze --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- so tune in next Tuesday. That'll give the public relations people a

(MORE)

HOWARD (ON MONITOR) (Contd)
week to promote the show, and we ought to get a hell of a rating with that, a fifty share easy --

A bewildered PRODUCTION ASSISTANT nudges the DIRECTOR, who wheels back to his mike --

DIRECTOR
(into mike)
-- and --

PRODUCTION ASSISTAN T
(to the DIRECTOR)
Listen, did you hear that? --

DIRECTOR
-- two --

The monitor screen erupts into a commercial for a cat-food chow-chow-chow --

AUDIO MAN
(leaning in from his glassed-in cubicle)
What was that about?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(to the DIRECTOR)
Howard just said he was going to blow his brains out next Tuesday.

DIRECTOR
What're you talking about?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Didn't you hear him? He just said --

HARRY HUNTER
What's wrong now?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Howard just said he was going to kill himself next Tuesday.

HARRY HUNTER
What do you mean Howard just said he was going to kill himself next Tuesday?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(nervously riffling through her script)
He was supposed to do a tag on Rockefeller-bump-commercial --

AUDIO MAN
(from his doorway)
He said tune in next Tuesday, I'm going to shoot myself --

Everybody's attention is now on the double bank of black-and-white monitor screens showing various parts of the studio, all of which show agitated behavior. Several of the screens show HOWARD at his desk in vehement discussion with a clearly startled FLOOR MANAGER with headset and no less startled ASSOCIATE PRODUCER --

DIRECTOR
(on mike to FLOOR MANAGER)
What the hell's going on?

On the pre-set monitor screen, the FLOOR MANAGER with headset looks up --

FLOOR MANAGER (ON SCREEN)
(voice booming into the control room)
I don't know. He just said he was going to blow his brains out --

DIRECTOR
(into mike)
What the hell's this all about, Howard?

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
(shouting at the floor PERSONNEL gathering around him)
Will you get the hell out of here? We'll be back on air in a couple of seconds!

DIRECTOR
(roaring into the mike)
What the fuck's going on, Howard?

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I can't hear you --

DIRECTOR
(bawling at the AUDIO MAN)
Put the studio mike on!

AUDIO MAN
We're back on in eleven seconds --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(stop-watching)
-- ten seconds --

HARRY HUNTER
(his voice now booming out into the studio)
Howard! What the hell are you doing? Have you flipped or what?!

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(murmurs into his mike)
We start with 31 -- 32 --

HARRY HUNTER
(roaring at the AUDIO MAN)
Turn the mike off!

AUDIO MAN
(now back in the control room)
What the hell's going on?

HARRY HUNTER
(raging)
Turn the fucking sound off, you stupid son of a bitch! This is going out live!

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(stop-watching)
Three -- two -- one --

At which point, the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR pushes a button; the jangling catfood commercial flips off the show monitor to be instantly replaced by a scene of gathering bedlam around HOWARD's desk. The AUDIO MAN flees in panic back to his cubicle to turn off the audio but not before HARRY HUNTER and the DIRECTOR going out live to 67 affiliates can be heard booming:

HARRY HUNTER
Chrissakes! Black it out! This is going out live to sixty-seven fucking affiliates! Shit!

DIRECTOR
This is the dumbest thing I ever saw! --

13. INT: MAX SCHUMACHER'S OFFICE - FIFTH FLOOR - ROOM 509 13.

MAX SCHUMACHER, behind his desk staring petrified at his office console on which pandemonium has broken out.

The FLOOR MANAGER and the ASSOCIATE PRODUCER and now an ELECTRICIAN are trying to pull HOWARD away from his desk and HOWARD is trying to hit anybody he can with an ineffective right hand haymaker --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Get the fuck away from me!

OTHER VOICES (ON MONITOR)
(coming from all directions)
-- cut the show! --
-- get him out of there! --
-- go to standby! --
-- for Chrissakes, you stupid --

MAX'S PHONE RINGS --

MAX
(grabs the phone)
How the hell do I know? --
(he hangs up, seizes another phone, barks:)
Give me the network news control room!

On the MONITOR SCREEN, hysteria is clearly dominating. The SCREEN has suddenly leaped into a fragment of the just-done catfood COMMERCIAL, then a jarring shot of the bedlam of the studio floor. This particular camera seems unattended as it begins to PAN dementedly back and forth showing the confusion on the studio floor. Then abruptly the SCREEN is filled with Vice President-designate Nelson Rockefeller testifying before the Senate Rules Committee --

MAX
(shouting into phone)
Black it out!

The SCREEN abruptly goes into BLACK as MAX slashes his phone back into its cradle. His PHONE promptly RINGS again, but MAX is already headed for the door. The SCREEN goes into STANDBY. His SQUAWK BOX suddenly blares --

SQUAWK BOX
What the hell happened, Max? --

MAX
(shouting as he exits)
How the hell do I know? I'm going down now!

He strides into --

14. INT: ROOM 509 - COMMON ROOM OF NEWS EXECUTIVE OFFICES 14.

A large common room where all the SECRETARIES of the News Division EXECUTIVES have their desks. It is empty now except for one SECRETARY just now putting the cover on her typewriter. MAX strides through and exits into --

15. INT: FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR 15.

A long institutional corridor -- part of an endless maze of similar corridors -- with offices and technical rooms debouching on both sides. The corridor has begun to fill up with video-tape OPERATORS and other News Division PERSONNEL who happen to be working late -- all of whom are either wondering what happened or are telling others what happened. MAX yanks an exit door open and disappears down a flight of steps to emerge into --

16. INT: FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR 16.

-- which leads directly to the doors for the control room and for the studio. Coming out of the control room is the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, who, on spotting MAX striding down the corridor to him, says --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Jesus Christ, Mr. Schumacher! --

He follows MAX into the --

17. INT: STUDIO 17.

Everything seems to have quieted a bit, the hysteria down to mumbles and murmurs and occasional sounds of laughter. TELEPHONES are shrilly and incessantly RINGING. In the far corner of the studio sits HOWARD BEALE surrounded by HARRY HUNTER, the DIRECTOR, the ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, the PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, and the FLOOR MANAGER. CAMERAMEN, GRIPS and other FLOOR PERSONNEL are gathered in a FLUX of little clumps around the studio murmuring and muttering and giggling over the whole absurd episode. MAX heads straight for the GROUP around HOWARD. They part to let him in --

HARRY HUNTER
(to MAX)
Tom Cabell wants you to call as soon as you come in --

MAX nods, stares at HOWARD --

VOICE (O.S.)
Harry! Joe Sweeney on the phone! --

HARRY HUNTER
(bawls back)
I'm not taking any more calls!
Tell them Mr. Schumacher's here!
They can talk to him!

MAX
(staring at HOWARD)
Howard, you have got to be out of your everloving mind. Are you drunk?
(to the others)
How much boozing has he been doing today?

PHONES O.S. RING and RING. VOICES O.S. SHOUT --

VOICES (O.S.)
-- Mr. Schumacher, Mr. Cabell on the phone! --
-- Mr. Schumacher! Mr. Zangwill for you! --
-- Harry! Mr. Thackeray on Three! --

HOWARD slowly looks up to MAX who is still staring at him. He suddenly smiles broadly at MAX and winks.

VOICES (O.S.)
-- Harry! Thackeray wants to talk to you right now! --
-- Mr. Schumacher! Mr. Gianini wants to talk to you! --

MAX
(to HARRY HUNTER)
You better get hold of Mr. Chaney and Frank Hackett --

18. INT: FIFTH FLOOR - UBS BUILDING - ELEVATOR AREA - 10:47 P.M. 18.

FRANK HACKETT, Executive Senior Vice President of the network, 41 years old, one of the new cool young breed of management/merchandising executives, wearing a tuxedo -- (he had been pulled out of a dinner party in Westchester by this unfortunate business) -- comes out of the elevator and turns briskly into --

19. INT: FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR 19.

-- which is clotted with network EXECUTIVES of assorted sizes and ages. HACKETT, en route to Room 509, which is clearly the humming hub of activity up here, pauses to comment to one of the EXECUTIVES --

HACKETT
Lou, can't we clear out that downstairs lobby? There must be a hundred people down there, every TV station and wire service in the city. I could barely get in —

LOU
How'm I going to clear them out, Frank?

HACKETT murmurs and peels his way into --

20. INT: ROOM 509 - EXECUTIVES' OFFICES OF THE NEWS DIVISION 20.

HACKETT enters the common room, off which debouch the offices of the President of News (MAX SCHUMACHER), the VP News Division (ROBERT MCDONOUGH), the VP Public Relations News Division (MILTON STEINMAN), the VP Legal Affairs News Division (WALTER GIANINI), VP Owned Stations News (EMIL DUBROVNIK), General Manager News, Radio (MICHAEL SANDIES) -- all of whom are here and a number of other network EXECUTIVES. The VP Sales (JOE DONNELLY) is just taking the phone from the VP News Sales (RICHMOND KETTERING) who is seated at the desk of the secretary for VP Public Relations News Division --

DONNELLY
(on phone)
-- how many spots were wiped out? --

HACKETT
(to GIANINI, who is seated at another secretary's desk studying a typescript of the aborted news show)
Anything litigable? --

GIANINI
Not so far --

DONNELLY
(on phone)
-- We had to abort the show, Ed, what else could we do? We'll make good, don't worry about it --

HACKETT
(to ARTHUR ZANGWILL, VP Standards and Practices, now coming out of MAX's office)
Is Nelson in there?

ZANGWILL
He's talking to Wheeler. So far, over nine hundred fucking phone calls complaining about the foul language --

HACKETT
(mutters)
Shit --

P.R. MAN
(in b.g. on phone)
-- come on, Mickey, what page are you putting it on?! --

HACKETT is already crossing into --

21. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 21.

-- which is pretty well jammed with NELSON CHANEY (President of the network), 52, a patrician, sitting behind MAX's desk and on the phone, looking up to note HACKETT's arrival --

CHANEY
(on phone)
Frank Hackett just walked in --

MILTON STEINMAN (VP Public Relations News Division), early 50's, a rumpled, ordinarily amiable man, is standing by the desk on the phone to someone at CBS --

STEINMAN
(on phone)
I can't release the tape, Marty, we're still studying it ourselves --

A P.R. MAN sticks his head into the office --

P.R. MAN
(calling to STEINMAN)
ABC again, wants the tape --

STEINMAN
Tell him to go fuck himself --
(to phone)
And that goes for you too, Marty --

HACKETT
(to HOWARD BEALE, sitting on the couch)
You're off the air as of now.

CHANEY
(extending his phone to HACKETT)
He wants to talk to you --

HACKETT
(to MAX, leaning against a wall)
Who's replacing Beale tomorrow?

MAX
We're flying up Snowden from Washington.

STEINMAN
(leaning across HACKETT to turn up the volume knob on Max's desk)
All right, everybody hold it. Let's see how the other networks handled this --

He is referring to the four television monitors -- three on the wall and a large office console monitor of UBS-TV, now blurting out their respective commercials --

THACKERAY
(VP Stations Relations, lounging in the doorway)
The ten o'clock news opened with it --

HACKETT
(on phone)
Walter's drafted a statement, I haven't seen it yet -- I just got here, John, I was at a dinner party --

Suddenly, the faces of DAVE MARASH and ROLAND SMITH and CHUCK SCARBOROUGH and ROGER GRIMSBY and BILL BEUTEL and the UBS local news anchorman, TIM HALLOWAY, are on the screen. Affable DAVE MARASH on the CBS monitor is saying:

MARASH
(affably)
An unusual thing happened at one of our sister networks, UBS, this evening --

ROGER GRIMSBY
(almost simultaneously)
Howard Beale, one of television's most esteemed newscasters --

CHUCK SCARBOROUGH
Howard Beale interrupted his network news program tonight to announce --

HACKETT
(mutters)
Shit --

TIM HALLOWAY
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made a forceful address before the United Nations General Assembly --

HACKETT
(to MAX)
How are we handling it?

MAX
Halloway's going to make a brief statement at the end of the show to the effect Howard's been under great personal stress, et cetera --

HACKETT reaches to click off the bank of monitor screens. They abruptly go black.

HACKETT
(on phone)
I'll call you back, John.
(returns the phone to its cradle, regards the gathered EXECUTIVES)
All right. We've got a stockholders' meeting tomorrow at which we're going to announce the restructuring of management plan, and I don't want this grotesque incident to interfere with that. I'll suggest Mr. Ruddy open with a short statement washing this whole thing off, and, you, Max, better have some answers in case some of those nuts that always come to stockholders' meetings --

MAX
(back to leaning against the wall)
Mr. Beale has been under great personal and professional pressures --

HACKETT
(exploding)
I've got some goddam surprises for you too, Schumacher! I've had it
(MORE)

HACKETT (Contd)
up to here with your cruddy division and its annual thirty-three million dollar deficit! --

MAX
Keep your hands off my news division Frank. We're responsible to corporate level, not to you.

HACKETT
We'll goddam well see about that!

CHANEY
All right, take it easy. Right now, how're we going to get Beale out of here? I understand there's at least a hundred reporters and camera crews in the lobby.

MAX
We've got a limo waiting at the freight entrance. Howard'll stay at my place tonight. There's bound to be press around his place.

22. EXT: SIXTH AVENUE - TELEVISION ROW - WEDNESDAY, 10:00 A.M. - DAY 22.

HIGH WIDE ANGLE SHOT and/or SHOTS showing Television Row -- that quarter mile of Sixth Avenue where the four television networks have their chrome, marble and glass buildings rearing futuristically into the sky -- 30 Rock (NBC-TV), Black Rock (CBS-TV), and Hard Rock (ABC-TV), and, of course, the network of our story, UBS-TV. It is a nice, sunny day --

23. INT: UBS BUILDING - 5TH FLOOR - MAX'S OFFICE - WEDNESDAY - 10:00 A.M. - DAY 23.

SUNLIGHT streaming in. MAX at his desk, shirtsleeved, on the phone --

MAX
(on phone)
-- I want Snowden here by noon. Have Lester cover the Rockefeller hearings and give the White House to Doris --

MAX'S SECRETARY sticks her head in --

SECRETARY
You're late for your screening.

MAX hangs up, stands, gathers his jacket off a chair and heads for the door --

MAX
If John Wheeler calls, switch him to Screening Room Seven --

He exits --

24. INT: NINTH FLOOR - SCREENING ROOM 7 24.

A middling-sized screening room with about 20 seats. There are two people already there -- a whippet-like, casually-dressed man of 36, BILL HERRON, and the VP Programs, DIANA CHRISTENSON, dressed in slacks and blouse, 34, tall, willowy, and with the best ass ever seen on a Vice President in charge of Programming --

MAX
(entering)
I'm sorry -- this Beale business --

MAX and DIANA exchange nods and professionally polite greetings --

HERRON
(buzzing the projectionist)
Diana asked if she could sit in on this --

MAX
Fine --
(sits, calls to DIANA)
How's it going?

DIANA shrugs, smiles. The lights in the room go down. A shaft of light shoots out from the projection room. The PHONE at MAX's elbow BUZZES. HE picks it up --

MAX
(murmurs into phone)
Max Schumacher -- I'm glad I got you, John. Listen, I got into a hassle with Frank Hackett last night over the Howard Beale thing, and he made a crack about the stockholders' meeting this afternoon. He said something about having some surprises for me. Is there something going on, John, I don't know about? ... John, I'm counting on you and Mr. Ruddy to back me up against that son of a bitch ... Okay, see you this afternoon --

He hangs up, leans back, watches the documentary film which has just begun. ON SCREEN, a handsome black woman in her early 30's --

MAX
Who's that, Laureen Hobbs?

HERRON
Yeah.

-- is sitting in a typical panel discussion grouping, flanked by three MEN and a WOMAN, two white, two black, all very urban guerilla, in fatigues, sun glasses and combat boots. MISS HOBBS looks calmly into camera and says:

LAUREEN HOBBS (ON SCREEN)
The Communist Party believes that the most pressing political necessity today is the consolidation of the revolutionary, radical and democratic movements into a United Front --

The PHONE BUZZES softly. MAX picks it up --

MAX
(murmurs into phone)
Yeah? ... Oh, goddamit, when, Louise? ... Well, did he say anything? ... All right, thanks.
(hangs up, promptly picks up again)
Four-eight-oh-seven --

LAUREEN HOBBS (ON SCREEN) (in b.g.)
Repression is the response of an increasingly desperate, imperialist ruling clique. Indeed, the entire apparatus of the bourgeois-democratic state especially its judicial systems and its prisons is disintegrating --

MAX.
(on phone)
Harry, Howard left my house about ten minutes ago presumably headed here. Let me know as soon as he gets here.

LAUREEN HOBBS (ON SCREEN) (in b.g.)
The fascist thrust must be resisted in its incipient stages by the broadest possible coalition --

25. INT: SCREENING ROOM 7 - TWENTY MINUTES LATER 25.

Room still dark. ON SCREEN, NUMBERED WHITE LEADER is rolling down —

HERRON
What we're going to see now is something really sensational. The Flagstaff Independent Bank in Arizona was ripped off last week by a terrorist group called the Ecumenical Liberation Army, and they themselves actually took movies of the rip-off while they were ripping it off. It's in black and white, but wait'll you see it --

The SCREEN suddenly erupts into film of the interior of a bank being entered in the wake of THREE MEN, two of them black, and TWO WOMEN, one black and one white. They disperse to various parts of the bank as if they were here on legitimate business --

DIANA
The Ecumenical Liberation Army — is that the one that kidnapped Patty Hearst?

HERRON
No, that's the Symbionese Liberation Army. This is the Ecumenical Liberation Army. They're the ones who kidnapped Mary Ann Gifford three weeks ago. There's a hell of a lot of liberation armies in the revolutionary underground and a lot of kidnapped heiresses. That's Mary Ann Gifford —

This last in reference to the young white woman on screen who is lugging a shopping bag as she joins a line at a teller's window --

DIANA
You mean, they actually shot this film while they were ripping off the bank?

HERRON
Yeah, wait'll you see it. I don't know whether to edit or leave it raw like this. That's the Great Ahmed Khan; he's the leader --

ON SCREEN, the film has gone out of focus a couple of times and bounced meaninglessly around the bank and finally settled on a large, powerful black man at one of the desks, presumably writing out a series of deposit slips --

DIANA
This is terrific stuff. Where did you get it?

HERRON
I got everything through Laureen Hobbs. She's my contact for all this stuff.

DIANA
I thought she was straight Communist Party.

HERRON
Right. But she's trying to unify all the factions in the underground, so she knows everybody.

ON SCREEN, the CAMERA has whooshed amateurishly about, unfocuses and focuses again to pick up MARY ANN GIFFORD bending over her shopping bag and pulling out a Czech service submachine gun 9 Parabellum which she points to the ceiling and apparently fires; the FILM is silent, but the reactions of everyone around suggest clearly something was fired. The FILM gets fragmented and panicky about here, as does the activity in the bank. The PHONE at MAX's elbow BUZZES. MAX picks it up.

MAX
(on the phone, while in b.g. a bank hold-up goes on on screen)
Yeah? ... All right, put him on --

26. INT: THE NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM - ROOM 517 26.

HARRY HUNTER, on phone, is using an empty desk in the main room. Normal news room activity in b.g. --

HARRY HUNTER
(on phone, leans back to call into HOWARD's office)
Howard -- I've got Max on four, would you pick up? --

27. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE 27.

HOWARD
(picking up phone)
Listen, Max, I'd like another shot --

28. INT: SCREENING ROOM 7 28.

The silent fcotage of the frenetic bank robbery is still going on in b.g.

MAX
(on phone)
Oh, come on, Howard --

29. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE 29.

HOWARD
(on phone)
I don't mean the whole show. I'd just like to come on, make some kind of brief farewell statement and then turn the show over to Jack Snowden. I have eleven years at this network, Max. I have some standing in this industry. I don't want to go out like a clown. It'll be simple and dignified. You and Harry can check the copy --

30. INT: NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM 30.

ACROSS HARRY HUNTER on phone, looking through the open door of HOWARD's office to HOWARD at his desk in b.g.

HARRY HUNTER
(on phone)
-- I think it'll take the strain off the show, Max. How much time do you want, Howard?

HOWARD
(in b.g., on phone)
A minute forty-five, maybe two ...

HARRY HUNTER
All right, I'll give you two on the top, then we'll go to Jack Snowden with the Kissinger UN speech --

31. INT: SCREENING ROOM 7 31.

The show is over, the room lights are on. In b.g., DIANA and HERRON stand, murmur to each other --

MAX
(on phone)
And no booze today, Howard --

In b.g., DIANA and HERRON move for the door, wave goodbyes. MAX waves slackly in return. He can't help noticing as DIANA leaves that she has the most beautiful ass ever seen on a VP Programs --

32. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE 32.

HOWARD
(on phone)
No booze --

And hangs up. For a moment, he just sits, scowling and making curious little grimaces. Then he stands, removes his jacket, dumps it on a chair. He rolls his sleeves up and suddenly makes a strange little GRUNT. He sits behind his desk, fits a piece of paper into the machine and then, again, suddenly, he makes a strange little GROWL --

33. INT: NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM 33.

Our PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, remembered perhaps from the control room scene, passes HOWARD's open door and is given pause by the strange little noises coming from HOWARD's office. She stands in the doorway a moment watching HOWARD GRUNTING, GROWLING and SNARLING as he CLACKS away at the typewriter --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
You all right, Mr. Beale?
(BEALE nods)
You want me to close your door, Mr. Beale?
(HOWARD nods, types away, GRUNTS, GROWLS)

The PRODUCTION ASSISTANT closes the door.

34. INT: 14TH FLOOR - UBS BUILDING - ELEVATOR AREA 34.

DIANA and HERRON come out of one of the elevators and turn left to the glass doors marked: DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAMMING. They continue into --

35. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - RECEPTION AREA 35.

(Needless to say, there is no one at the receptionist's desk.) DIANA and HERRON head down --

36. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - CORRIDOR 36.

DIANA pauses en route to lean into one of the offices --

DIANA
George, can you come in my office for a minute?

She and HERRON continue on, turn into --

37. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM 37.

Where the SECRETARIES are all slaving away, reading magazines and chatting among themselves. An occasional PHONE RINGS. At the far end of the room, a chunky WOMAN in her late 30's is instructing her SECRETARY in something. DIANA hails her --

DIANA
Barbara, is Tommy around anywhere?

BARBARA (in b.g.)
I think so.

DIANA
I'd like to see the two of you for a moment --

She leads HERRON now into --

38. INT: DIANA'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE 38.

The SECRETARY hands a sheaf of telephone messages to DIANA which she carries with her into --

39. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE 39.

DIANA enters, followed by HERRON. She sits, skims through her messages. The office is executive-size, windows looking out on the canyons of glass and stone skyscrapers on Sixth Avenue, desk piled high with scripts. GEORGE BOSCH (VP Program Development East Coast), a slight, balding man of 39, enters the office, nods to HERRON, takes a seat; and is immediately followed by BARBARA SCHLESINGER (Head of the Story Department), the chunky lady just called in by DIANA, and TOMMY PELLEGRINO (Assistant VP Programs), 36, swarthy, coiffed and moustachioed. They find seats on the chairs, the small couch. HERRON remains standing --

DIANA
(introducing)
This is Bill Herron from our West Coast Special Programs Department -- Barbara Schlesinger — George Bosch -- Tommy Pellegrino -- Look, I just saw some rough footage of a special Bill's doing on the revolutionary underground. Most of it's tedious stuff of Laureen Hobbs and four fatigue jackets muttering mutilated Marxism. But he's got about eight minutes of a bank robbery that is absolutely sensational. Authentic stuff. Actually shot while the robbery was going on. Remember the Mary Ann Gifford kidnapping? Well, it's that bunch of nuts. She's in the film shooting off machine guns. Really terrific footage. I think we can get a hell of a movie of the week out of it, maybe even a series.

PELLEGRINO
A series out of what? What're we talking about?

DIANA
Look, we've got a bunch of hobgoblin radicals called the Ecumenical Liberation Army who go around taking home movies of themselves robbing banks. Maybe they'll take movies of themselves kidnapping heiresses, hijacking 747's, bombing bridges, assassinating ambassadors. We'd open each week's segment with that authentic footage, hire a couple of writers to write some story behind that footage, and we've got ourselves a series.

BOSCH
A series about a bunch of bank-robbing guerillas?

SCHLESINGER
What're we going to call it —

DIANA
Why not? They've got Strike Force, Task Force, SWAT -- why not Che Guevara and his own little mod squad? Listen, I sent you all a concept analysis report yesterday. Did any of you read it?
(apparently not)
Well, in a nutshell, it said the American people are turning sullen. They've been clobbered on all sides by Vietnam, Watergate, the inflation, the depression. They've turned off, shot up, and they've fucked themselves limp. And nothing helps. Evil still triumphs over all, Christ is a dope-dealing pimp, even sin turned out to be impotent. The whole world seems to be going nuts and flipping off into space like an abandoned balloon. So -- this concept analysis report concludes -- the American people want somebody to articulate their rage for them. I've been telling you people since I took this job six months ago that I want angry shows. I don't want conventional programming on this network. I want counter-culture. I want anti-establishment.

She closes the door.

DIANA (Contd)
Now, I don't want to play butch boss with you people. But when I took over this department, it had the worst programming record in television history. This network hasn't one show in the top twenty. This network is an industry joke. We better start putting together one winner for next September. I want a show developed, based on the activities of a terrorist group. Joseph Stalin and his merry band of Bolsheviks. I want ideas from you people. And, by the way, the next time I send an audience research report around, you all
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
better read it, or I'll sack the fucking lot of you, is that clear?
(apparently, it is. She turns to HERRON)
I'll be out on the coast in four weeks. Can you set up a meeting with Laureen Hobbs for me?

HERRON
Sure.

40. INT: A BANQUET ROOM - NEW YORK HILTON - WEDNESDAY - 3:00 P.M. 40.

LONG SHOT. A stockholders' meeting. Standing room only. Some 200 STOCKHOLDERS seated in the audience; others standing around the walls. On the rostrum, a phalanx of UBS CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, seated in three rows, including EDWARD RUDDY, Chairman of the Board, the PRESIDENTS and SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENTS of the other divisions and other groups -- the UBS Records Group, the UBS Publishing Group, the UBS Theater Chain, etc. Representing the network are NELSON CHANEY and the divisional heads -- GEORGE NICHOLS, President of the Radio Division; NORMAN MOLDAVIAN, President Owned Stations; General Counsel WALTER AMUNDSEN, and, of course, MAX SCHUMACHER, President of the News Division. FRANK HACKETT, Senior Executive Vice President UBS-TV, is at the lectern making the annual report --

HACKETT
(in the droning manner of such reports)
... but the business of management is management; and, at the time C. C. and A. took control, the UBS-TV network was foundering with less than seven percent of national television revenues, most network programs being sold at station rates. I am therefore pleased to announce I am submitting to the Board of Directors a plan for the organization of the network with the intention of creating a subcorporate second line of authority, for the coordination of the main profit centers, and with the specific intention of making each division more responsive to management --

ANOTHER ANGLE SINGLING OUT MAX SCHUMACHER in the second

row of the phalanx of EXECUTIVES, bored with the proceedings, and whispering to NELSON CHANEY seated beside him. INCLUDE in frame the 67 year old, silver-haired brahmin of television, EDWARD RUDDY, who is seated in the front row. HACKETT in b.g. It is some twenty minutes later --

HACKETT (Contd)
(reading from his report)
... Point Three. The division producing the lowest rate of return has been the News Division --

MAX suddenly begins paying attention --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- with its 98 million dollar budget and its average annual deficit of 32 million. To me, it is inconceivable such a wanton fiscal affront go unresisted --

ANOTHER ANGLE ACROSS HACKETT with a smoldering MAX SCHUMACHER in b.g. --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- The new plan calls for local news to be transferred to Owned Stations Divisions --

MAX in b.g., stares angrily down his row towards NORMAN MOLDANIAN, who studiously avoids his eye --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- News-Radio would be transferred to the UBS Radio Division --

ACROSS MAX turning in his seat to scowl at GEORGE NICHOLS in the row behind him --

HACKET (Contd) (in b.g.)
-- and, in effect, the News Division would be reduced --

MAX leaning forward trying to catch the eye of EDWARD RUDDY in the front row. RUDDY is staring stonily ahead --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- from an independent division to a department accountable to network --

MAX is about ready to blow his stack --

41. INT: BANQUET ROOM - NEW YORK HILTON - WEDNESDAY - 5:30 P.M. 41.

The stockholders' meeting is over. The floor is a swirling CRUSH of STOCKHOLDERS mingling with EXECUTIVES. MAX SCHUMACHER is elbowing his way through the crowded aisle to get to where EDWARD RUDDY is chatting away with a COUPLE of STOCKHOLDERS --

MAX
(to RUDDY)
What was that all about, Ed? --

RUDDY
(turning to MAX, urbane)
This is not the time, Max.

MAX
(barely containing himself)
Why wasn't I told about this? Why was I led onto that podium and publicly guillotined in front of the stockholders? Goddammit, I spoke to John Wheeler this morning, and he assured me the News Division was safe. Are you trying to get me to resign? It's a hell of a way to do it.

RUDDY
(silken murmur)
We'll talk about this tomorrow at our regular morning meeting.

RUDDY turns back to the clutch of STOCKHOLDERS around him. MAX wheels away in a rage --

42. EXT: NEW YORK HILTON HOTEL - SIXTH AVENUE - DUSK 42.

The Sixth Avenue entrance to the hotel. Taxis pulling in, disgorging PEOPLE; taxis pulling out with new fares. MAX comes striding out of the hotel, sore as a boil. PAN HIM as he bulls his way through the line of taxis and across jammed, clanging 5:50 P.M. Sixth Avenue --

43. INT: UBS BUILDING - 5TH FLOOR CORRIDOR 43.

MAX, steaming, strides down the corridor to --

44. INT: ROOM 509 - NEWS DIV. EXEUCTIVE OFFICES 44.

Empty except for perhaps one SECRETARY pecking away at her typewriter. MAX strides across and into --

45. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 45.

MAX takes off his jacket, throws it on the couch, sits behind his desk. But he's too steamed to stay there long. A moment later, he's up again, strides around, a caged lion. He thumps his desk angrily, strides around, then whips his jacket up from the couch and strides out --

46. INT: CONTROL ROOM - NETWORK NEWS SHOW 46.

The wall CLOCK reads 6:28. The DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, LIGHTING DIRECTOR and PRODUCTION ASSISTANT are at their long shelf in front of the double bank of television monitors. The AUDIO MAN is off in his glassed-in cubicle. HARRY HUNTER and his SECRETARY and the UNIT MANAGER are on the raised level in the back. HUNTER is on the phone, looks up as the door to the control room opens, and MAX, carrying his jacket, comes in. Curious looks from the PERSONNEL here; presidents of news rarely come down to the control room. HUNTER finishes his phone call, offers his seat to MAX, but MAX prefers standing in the back --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
... five seconds --

LIGHTING DIRECTOR
-- picture's too thick --

DIRECTOR
-- coming to -- and one --

The show monitor, which has been showing color patterns, now suddenly flicks on to show HOWARD BEALE as he looks up from the sheaf of papers on his desk and says:

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Good evening. Today is Wednesday, September the Twenty-Fifth, and this is my last broadcast. Yesterday, I announced on this program that I would commit public suicide, admittedly an act of madness. Well, I'll tell you what happened -- I just ran out of bullshit --

HARRY HUNTER
All right, cut him off.

The MONITOR SCREEN goes black.

MAX
(from the back wall)
Leave him on --

HOWARD's image promptly flicks back on --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
(looking o.s.)
Am I still on the air?

Everybody in the control room looks to MAX --

MAX
If this is how he wants to go out, this is how he goes out.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I don't know any other way to say it except I just ran out of bull-shit ...

The PHONE RINGS. HUNTER picks it up. ANOTHER PHONE RINGS. HUNTER'S SECRETARY picks it up.

HUNTER
(on first phone)
Look, Mr. Schumacher's right here, do you want to talk to him?
(extends the phone to MAX)

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Bullshit is all the reasons we give for living, and, if we can't think up any reasons of our own, we always have the God bullshit --

HUNTER'S SECRETARY
(awe)
Holy Mary Mother of Christ --

MAX
(on phone)
Yeah, what is it, Tom? --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
We don't know why the hell we're going through all this pointless pain, humiliation and decay, so there better be someone somewheres who does know; that's the God bullshit --

MAX
(on phone)
He's saying life is bullshit, and it is, so what're you screaming about? --

He hangs up. The PHONE promptly RINGS again. HUNTER'S SECRETARY picks it up. (HUNTER is on the phone that rang before.)

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
If you don't like the God bullshit, how about the man bullshit? Man is a noble creature who can order his own world, who needs God?

HUNTER'S SECRETARY
(to MAX)
Mr. Amundsen for you, Mr. Schumacher.

MAX
I'm not taking calls.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Well, if there's anybody out there who can look around this demented slaughterhouse of a world we live in and tell me man is a noble creature, that man is full of bullshit --

DIRECTOR
(staring in awe at HOWARD on the screen)
I know he's sober, so he's got to be just plain nuts --
(starts to giggle)

HARRY HUNTER
(screaming)
What's so goddam funny?

DIRECTOR
I can't help it, Harry, it's funny --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I don't have any kids --

A PHONE RINGS. HUNTER'S SECRETARY picks it up.

HARRY HUNTER
Max, this is going out live to sixty-seven affiliates --

MAX
Leave him on.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- and I was married for thirty-three years of shrill, shrieking fraud --

A breathless and distraught YOUNG WOMAN bursts into the control room.

YOUNG WOMAN
Mr. Hackett's trying to get through to you --

MAX
Tell Mr. Hackett to go fuck himself --

47. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE 47.

DIANA, sitting alone in her office, watching HOWARD BEALE on her office console --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
I don't have any bullshit left. I just ran out of it, you see --

48. INT: CONTROL ROOM - NETWORK NEWS SHOW 48.

-- as FRANK HACKETT and his assistant, TOM CABELL, wrench the door open and stride in --

HACKETT
(roaring)
Get him off! Are you people nuts?!

The TECHNICAL DIRECTOR taps a button, and the SCREEN mercifully goes black.

49. INT: LOBBY - UBS BUILDING 49.

White-haired, patrician EDWARD RUDDY, Chairman of the Board, impeccably groomed, fastidious in a light topcoat, making his way through the absolute CRUSH of NEWSPAPER PEOPLE, WIRE SERVICE PEOPLE, CAMERA CREWS from CBS, NBC, ABC, from the local stations, WPIX, WOR-TV, METROMEDIA, and from Channel 13, the educational channel. A half dozen SECURITY GUARDS protect the elevators, and three more help RUDDY get through the GLARING CAMERA LIGHTS and the horde of REPORTERS thrusting mikes at him --

RUDDY
(moving through the crowd)
-- I'm sorry, I don't have all the facts yet --

50. INT: 20TH FLOOR - LOBBY, LOUNGE, CORRIDOR 50.

MAX, standing by the deserted reception desk, in the empty, silent lounge. This is the top-management floor, and the decor, which is posh-austere, reflects the eminence of the top executives who have their offices here. It is all silent and empty now, cathedral, hushed, echoing. Way down at the far end of the corridor, the double doors of the corner office open, and NELSON CHANEY leans out and beckons to MAX, who starts down the plush carpeting in response --

51. INT: MR. RUDDY'S OFFICE 51.

Large, regal. Impressionist originals on those walls which are not glass through which the crepuscular grandeur of New York at night can be seen. RUDDY sits behind his desk. JOHN WHEELER, 59, silent, forceful, lounges in one of the several leather chairs. The door opens, and NELSON CHANEY and MAX SCHUMACHER come in. Everybody nods at everybody else. MAX slumps into a leather chair.

RUDDY
(murmurs to CHANEY)
I'll want to see Mr. Beale after this.

CHANEY promptly picks up a corner phone and calls down to the Fourteenth Floor.

RUDDY (Contd)
(regards MAX briefly, murmurs)
The way I hear it, Max, you're primarily responsible for this colossally stupid prank. Is that the fact, Max?

MAX
That's the fact.

RUDDY
It was unconscionable. There doesn't seem to be anything more to say.

MAX
I have something to say, Ed.
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
I'd like to know why that whole debasement of the News Division announced at the stockholders' meeting today was kept secret from me. You and I go back twenty years, Ed. I took this job with your personal assurance that you would back my autonomy against any encroachment. But ever since CC and A acquired control of the UBS Systems ten months ago, Hackett's been taking over everything. Who the hell's running this network, you or CC and A? I mean, you're the Chairman, and Frank Hackett's just CC and A's hatchet man. Nelson here -- for Pete's sake, he's the president of the network -- he hasn't got anything to say about anything any more. Who the hell's running this company, you or CC and A?

RUDDY
(murmurs)
I told you at the stockholders' meeting, Max, that we would discuss all that at our regular meeting tomorrow morning. If you had been patient, I would've explained to you that I too thought Frank Hackett precipitate and that the reorganization of the News Division would not be executed until everyone, specifically you, Max, had been consulted and satisfied. Instead, you sulked off like a child and engaged this network in a shocking and disgraceful episode. Your position here is no longer tenable regardless of how management is restructured. I expect you to bring in your resignation at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, and we will coordinate our statements to the least detriment of everyone.
(to WHEELER)
Bob McDonough will take over the News Division till we sort all this out.
(WHEELER nods. RUDDY turns to CHANEY still in the corner of the room on the phone)
(MORE)

RUDDY (Contd)
I'd like to see Mr. Beale now --

CHANEY
(on phone)
They're looking for him, Ed. They don't know where he is --

52. INT: LOBBY - UBS BUILDING 52.

HOWARD BEALE, bleached almost white by the GLARE of the CAMERA LIGHTS, and almost totally obscured by the tidal CRUSH of cameras, REPORTERS, SECURITY GUARDS around him --

HOWARD
-- every day, five days a week, for fifteen years, I've been sitting behind that desk -- the dispassionate pundit --

53. INT: DIANA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM 53.

DIANA, naked, sitting on the edge of her bed in a dark bedroom, watching HOWARD BEALE's impromptu press conference on television --

HOWARD (Contd)
(on TV screen)
-- reporting with seemly detachment the daily parade of lunacies that constitute the news -- and --

Also on the bed is a naked young STUD, who isn't really that interested in the 11:00 News. He is fondling, fingering, noodling and nuzzling DIANA with the clear intention of mounting her --

HOWARD (Contd)
(on TV screen)
-- just once I wanted to say what I really felt --

The young STUD is getting around to nibbling at DIANA's breasts --

DIANA
(watching the TV set with single-minded intensity)
Knock it off, Arthur --

54. EXT: UBS BUILDING - 9:00 A.M., THURSDAY, SEPT. 26 - DAY 54.

Bright morning sunshine. DIANA, in a pants suit and carrying half a dozen scripts, enters the building --

55. INT: UBS BUILDING - LOBBY 55.

DIANA, pausing at the newsstand to pick up the morning papers, which she reads en route to the elevators --

56. INT: UBS BUILDING - 14TH FLOOR - 9:15 A.M. 56.

DIANA briskly enters through the door marked: DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAMMING, and whisks off down the corridor --

57. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM 57.

DIANA crosses to her own office. THREE SECRETARIES, including DIANA's, are abuzz in a corner over last night's Howard Beale show. DIANA'S SECRETARY scurries to follow DIANA as, in b.g., BARBARA SCHLESINGER comes out of her office carrying four scripts --

58. INT: DIANA'S OUTER OFFICE 58.

DIANA, rummaging through the papers on top of the SECRETARY's desk as the SECRETARY enters --

DIANA
Did the overnight ratings come in yet?

SECRETARY
They're on your desk.

DIANA
Have you still got yesterday's overnights around?

SECRETARY
Shall I bring them in?

DIANA
Yeah --

She exits into --

59. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE 59.

Morning SUNLIGHT blasting in. DIANA moves to her desk, stands behind it, scanning the front pages of

the newspapers piled on her desk, then sits and studies the overnight ratings also on her desk. The SECRETARY enters with yesterday's overnights, a sheet of paper, which she extends to DIANA, who promptly studies them. The SECRETARY exits as BARBARA SCHLESINGER enters, sinks onto a chair with a sigh --

SCHLESINGER
These are those four outlines submitted by Universal for an hour series. You needn't bother to read them. I'll tell them to you. The first one is set in a large Eastern law school, presumably Harvard. The series if irresistably entitled The Young Lawyers. The running characters are a crusty but benign ex-Supreme Court Justice, presumably Oliver Wendell Holmes by way of Dr. Zorba. There is a beautiful girl graduate student and the local district attorney who is brilliant and sometimes cuts corners --

DIANA
(studying the overnights)
Next one --

SCHLESINGER
The second one is called The Amazon Squad --

DIANA
(studying the overnights)
Lady cops?

SCHLESINGER
The running characters are a crusty but benign police lieutenant who's always getting heat from the Commissioner, a hard-nosed, hard-drinking detective who thinks women belong in the kitchen, and a brilliant and beautiful young girl cop fighting the feminist battle on the force --

DIANA
(now studying the front page of the Daily News)
We're up to our ears in lady cop shows.

SCHLESINGER
The next one is another investigative reporter show. A crusty but benign managing editor who's always getting heat from the publisher --

DIANA
You know, Barbara, today is Yom Kippur, and they're worried about another war in the Middle East. They've discovered a blood clot in Nixon's right lung, there's a hurricane in Honduras, drought among the Tauregs, crop failure in India, two major banks have reduced their prime rate and --
(she flips the Daily News over so BARBARA can read it)
-- the whole front page of the Daily News is Howard Beale.

ACROSS BARBARA SCHLESINGER, half-standing so she can read the newspaper and showing the front page of the Daily News -- which consists of a 3/4 page blowup of HOWARD BEALE topped by a 52 point black banner headline:
-- BEALE FIRED --

DIANA (Contd)
-- it was also a two-column story on page one of the Times --
(calls to her SECRETARY)
Helen, call Mr. Hackett's office, see if he can give me a few minutes this morning --

59. INT: ROOM 520 - THE NETWORK NEWS ROOM - 9:30 A.M. 60.

MAX SCHUMACHER and BOB McDONOUGH (mid-40's) enter. The Network News Room is something less than Front Page, but, nevertheless, a news room. It's a long, large, windowless room, some 40 desks, mostly unoccupied, a wire room, typewriters and banks of television monitors on the wall. At the moment, work has stopped, and the ENTIRE PERSONNEL of the news room, some [illegible] PEOPLE -- EXECUTIVES and SECRETARIES, PRODUCERS, ASSISTANT PRODUCERS, HEAD WRITERS, WRITERS, DUTY AND ASSISTANT EDITORS, and DESK ASSISTANTS, ARTISTS, and FILM AND TAPE EDITORS, REPORTERS, NEWSCASTERS and CAMERA AND AUDIO MEN -- are all gathered standing and sitting about to hear MAX say --

MAX
Ladies and gentlemen, I've been at this network twelve years, and it's been on the whole a ball --

VOICE (in b.g.)
Louder --

MAX
(louder)
-- and I want to thank you all. Bob McDonough here will be taking over for me for the time being, and, much as I hate to admit it, I'm sure everything will go along just fine without me --

61. INT: UBS BUILDING - 15TH FLOOR - 10:00 A.M. 61.

DIANA turning into --

62. INT: HACKETT'S OUTER OFFICE 62.

The SECRETARY waves DIANA straight into --

63. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE 63.

where HACKETT sits unhappily at his desk poring over memos from his Stations Relations Department and reports from his Sales Department.

HACKETT
(not bothering to look up)
WKGO Kansas City refuses to carry our network news any more unless Beale is taken off the air --

DIANA
(drops the sheet of paper on HACKETT's desk)
Did you see the overnights on the Network News? It has an 8 in New York and a 9 in L.A. and a 27 share in both cities. Last night, Howard Beale went on the air and yelled bullshit for two minutes, and I can tell you right now that tonight's show will get a 30 share at least. I think we've lucked into something.

HACKETT
Oh, for God's sakes, are you suggesting we put that lunatic back on the air yelling bullshit?

DIANA
Yes, I think we should put Beale back on the air tonight and keep him on. Did you see the Times this morning? Did you see the News? We've got press coverage on this you couldn't buy for a million dollars. Frank, that dumb show jumped five rating points in one night! Tonight's show has got to be at least fifteen! We just increased our audience by twenty or thirty million people in one night. You're not going to get something like this dumped in your lap for the rest of your days, and you just can't piss it away! Howard Beale got up there last night and said what every American feels -- that he's tired of all the bullshit. He's articulating the popular rage. I want that show, Frank. I can turn that show into the biggest smash in television.

HACKETT
What do you mean, you want that show? It's a news show. It's not your department.

DIANA
I see Howard Beale as a latterday prophet, a magnificent messianic figure, inveighing against the hypocracies of our times, a strip Savonarola, Monday through Friday. I tell you, Frank, that could just go through the roof. And I'm talking about a six dollar cost per thousand show! I'm talking about a hundred, a hundred thirty thousand dollar minutes! Do you want to figure out the revenues of a strip show that sells for a hundred thousand bucks a minute? One show like that could pull this whole network right out of the hole! Now, Frank, it's being handed to us on a plate; let's not blow it!

HACKETT's intercom BUZZES.

HACKETT
(on intercom)
Yes? ... Tell him I'll be a few minutes.
(clicks off, regards DIANA)
Let me think it over.

DIANA
Frank, let's not go to committee about this. It's twenty after ten, and we want Beale in that studio by half-past six. We don't want to lose the momentum --

HACKETT
For God's sakes, Diana, we're talking about putting a manifestly irresponsible man on national television. I'd like to talk to Legal Affairs at least. And Herb Thackeray and certainly Joe Donnelly and Standards and Practices. And you know I'm going to be eyeball to eyeball with Mr. Ruddy on this. If I'm going to the mat with Ruddy, I want to make sure of some of my ground. I'm the one whose ass is going on the line. I'll get back to you, Diana.

64. INT: EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM - 12:20 P.M. 64.

A large room of white-linened tables, almost empty save for the five men at one of the window tables, with the spectacular view of midtown Manhattan. The five are FRANK HACKETT, NELSON CHANEY, WALTER AMUNDSEN (General Counsel Network,) ARTHUR ZANGWILL (VP Standards and Practices,) and JOE DONNELLY (VP Sales).

CHANEY
(who is standing)
I don't believe this! I don't believe the top brass of a national television network are sitting around their Caesar salads --

HACKETT
The top brass of a bankrupt national television network, with projected losses of close to a hundred and fifty million dollars this year.

CHANEY
I don't care how bankrupt! You can't seriously be proposing and the rest of us seriously considering putting on a pornographic network news show! The FCC will kill us!

HACKETT
Sit down, Nelson. The FCC can't do anything except rap our knuckles.

CHANEY sits.

AMUNDSEN
I don't even want to think about the litigious possibilities, Frank. We could be up to our ears in lawsuits.

CHANEY
The affiliates won't carry it --

HACKETT
The affiliates will kiss your ass if you can hand them a hit show.

CHANEY
The popular reaction --

HACKETT
We don't know the popular reaction. That's what we have to find out.

CHANEY
The New York Times --

HACKETT
The New York Times doesn't advertise on our network.

CHANEY
(stands)
All I know is that this violates every canon of respectable broadcasting.

HACKETT
We're not a respectable network. We're a whorehouse network, and we have to take whatever we can get.

CHANEY
Well, I don't want any part of it.
(MORE)

CHANEY (Contd)
I don't fancy myself the president of a whorehouse.

HACKETT
That's very commendable of you, Nelson. Now, sit down. Your indignation has been duly recorded, you can always resign tomorrow.

CHANEY sits.

HACKETT (Contd)
Look, what in substance are we proposing? -- merely to add editorial comment to our network news show. Brinkley, Severeid, and Reasoner all have their comments. So now Howard Beale will have his. I think we ought to give it a shot. Let's see what happens tonight.

DONNELLY
Well, I don't want to be the Babylonian messenger who has to tell Max Schumacher about this.

HACKETT
(flagging a WAITER)
Max Schumacher doesn't work at this network any more. Mr. Ruddy fired him last night.
(to the WAITER)
A telephone, please --
(to his COLLEAGUES)
Bob McDonough's running the News Division now --

A phone is placed before HACKETT, who promptly picks it up and murmurs:

HACKETT (Contd)
(on phone)
Bob McDonough in News, please --

65. INT: MAX'S OFFICE - 1:40 P.M. 65.

MAX is on the phone and cleaning out his desk and office at the same time. There are empty cartons everywhere into which MAX is dumping his files. There are piles of files on his desk, which he is skimming through even as he talks on the phone --

MAX
(on phone)
-- I'm just fine financially, Fred. I cashed in my stock options back in April when CC and A took over the network ...
(his other phone BUZZES)
That's my other phone, Fred, thanks for calling --
(hangs up, picks up the other phone)
Max Schumacher ... Hi, Dick, how's everything at NBC? --

HOWARD BEALE walks in, carrying an 8 x 12 photograph --

MAX (Contd)
I don't know, Dick. I might teach, I might write a book, whatever the hell one does when one approaches the autumn of one's years --

HOWARD puts the photograph on the desk in front of MAX.

MAX (Contd)
(studying the photograph)
My God, is that me? Was I ever that young?
(on phone)
Howard just showed me a picture of the whole Ed Murrow gang when I was at CBS. My God, Bob Trout, Harry Reasoner, Cronkite, Hollenbeck, and that's you, Howard, right? -- I'll see you, Dick --
(hangs up)

HOWARD
(points to the photo)
You remember this kid? He's the kid I think you once sent out to interview Cleveland Amory on vivisection --

MAX
(beginning to shake with laughter)
That's him -- that's him --

They both begin wheezing with laughter. MILTON STEINMAN pokes his head in --

STEINMAN
What the hell's so funny?

66. INT: ROOM 509 - EXECUTIVE OFFICES, NEWS DIVISION 66.

BOB McDONOUGH (VP Network News and interim head of the division) enters, frowning. There is a clot of PEOPLE spilling out from MAX SCHUMACHER's office from whence sounds of LAUGHTER and SHOUTING emanate. Even the SECRETARIES have left their desks to share the fun. McDONOUGH, wondering what the hell it's all about, makes his way through the CRUSH at the door, murmuring: "Excuse me ... sorry, honey ... etc." When he finally gets through the outer office and into --

67. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 67.

-- what he sees is a room filled with News Executives -- MAX, HOWARD, HARRY HUNTER, WALTER GIANINI (Legal Affairs), MICHAEL SANDIES, MILTON STEINMAN, and a COUPLE of younger PRODUCERS, delightedly listening to this gang of middle-aged men remembering their maverick days --

MAX
-- I jump out of bed in my pajamas! I grab my raincoat, run down the stairs, run out into the middle of the street, flag a cab. I jump in, I yell: "Take me to the middle of the George Washington Bridge!" --

HOWL of LAUGHTER --

MAX (Contd)
-- The driver turns around, he says: "Don't do it, kid, you got your whole life ahead of you!"

The room ROCKS with LAUGHTER. When it subsides, BOB McDONOUGH, standing in the doorway, says:

McDONOUGH
Well, if you think that's funny, wait'll you hear this. I've just come down from Frank Hackett's office, and he wants to put Howard back on the air tonight. Apparently, the ratings jumped five points last night, and he wants Howard to go back on and do his angry-man thing.

STEINMAN
What're you talking about?

McDONOUGH
I'm telling you -- they want Howard to go on yelling bullshit. They want Howard to go on spontaneously letting out his anger, a latterday prophet, denouncing the hypocrisies of our times --

HOWARD
Hey, that sounds pretty good --

MAX
Who's this they?

McDONOUGH
Hackett. Chaney was there, the Legal Affairs guy, and that girl from Programming.

MAX
Christenson? What's she got to do with it?

GIANINI (in b.g.)
You're kidding, aren't you, Bob?

McDONOUGH
I'm not kidding. I told them: "We're running a news department down there, not a circus. And Howard Beale isn't a bearded lady. And if you think I'll go along with this bastardization of the news, you can have my resignation along with Max Schumacher's right now. And I think I'm speaking for Howard Beale and everybody else down there in News."

HOWARD
Hold it, McDonough, that's my job you're turning down. I'll go nuts without some kind of work. What's wrong with being an angry prophet denouncing the hypocrisies of our times? What do you think, Max?

MAX
Do you want to be an angry prophet denouncing the hypocrisies of our times?

HOWARD
Yeah, I think I'd like to be an angry prophet denouncing the hypocrisies of our times.

MAX
Then grab it.

68. INT: 5TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - 3:00 P.M. 68.

MR. RUDDY, slim, slight, white-haired, imperially elegant in banker's gray, comes down the corridor towards Room 509. A VIDEOTAPE MAN, popping out of one of the rooms that debouch off this corridor, quickly stops, stands still --

VIDEOTAPE MAN
(murmurs)
Afternoon, Mr. Ruddy --

RUDDY
(murmurs)
Good afternoon.

He passes on towards --

69. INT: ROOM 509 69.

as RUDDY enters. The SIX SECRETARIES pecking away at their typewriters all pause to murmur awed --

SECRETARIES
Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy --
Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy -- etc.

-- as RUDDY passes through to --

70. INT: MAX'S OUTER OFFICE 70.

where MITZI (MAX'S SECRETARY), at her desk, murmurs:

MITZI
He's waiting for you, Mr. Ruddy --

RUDDY
(murmurs)
Thank you.

He goes into --

71. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 71.

-- and closes the door.

RUDDY
Nelson Chaney tells me Beale may actually go on the air this evening.

MAX
As far as I know, Howard's going to do it. Are you going to sit still for this, Ed?

RUDDY
(takes a folded piece of paper from his inside jacket pocket)
Yes. I think Hackett's overstepped himself. There's some kind of corporate maneuvering going on, Max. Hackett is clearly forcing a confrontation. That would account for his behavior at the stockholders' meeting. However, I think he's making a serious mistake with this Beale business. C. C. and A. would never make such an open act of brigandage, especially against the News Division. They are specifically enjoined against any manipulation of the News Division in the consent decree. I suspect C. C. and A. will be upset by Hackett's presumptuousness, certainly Mr. Jensen will. So I'm going to let Hackett have his head for awhile. He just might lose it over this Beale business.
(places the paper on MAX's desk)
I'd like you to reconsider your resignation.
(moves to the couch, sits, crosses his legs, murmurs)
I have to assume Hackett wouldn't take such steps without some support on the C. C. and A. board. I'll have to go directly to Mr. Jensen. When that happens, I'm going to need every friend I've got. And I certainly don't want Hackett's people in all the divisional positions. So I'd like you to stay on, Max.

MAX
Of course, Ed.

RUDDY
(stands)
Thank you, Max.

He opens the door and leaves.

72. INT: MAX'S OFFICE - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2 - 7:00 P.M. 72.

MAX sitting alone behind his desk in a dark office lit only by his desk lamp, watching the Network News Show starring HOWARD BEALE on his office console --

NARRATION
The initial response to the new Howard Beale was not auspicatory. The press was without exception hostile and industry reaction negative. The ratings for the Thursday and Friday show were both 14 and with a 37 share, but Monday's rating dropped two points, clearly suggesting the novelty had worn off --

On the office console, HOWARD BEALE doesn't seem too much different than he had always been. He scowls, frowns, seems to be muttering --

NARRATION (Contd)
-- Indeed, Howard Beale played his new role of latter-day prophet poorly. He was, after all, a newsman, not an actor. He was uncertain, uncomfortable, sometimes inaudible. The general feeling around the network was that this new Howard Beale would be aborted in a matter of days --

73. 73.

On the office console, the Network News Show has come to an end; the CLOSING THEME MUSIC emerges into SOUND, and the show's CREDITS begin to roll. MAX clicks off the set, folds his hands on the desk and sits glumly regarding his folded hands. After a moment, he becomes aware of another presence in the room and looks to the doorway where DIANA CHRISTENSON is standing, wearing a white blouse and dark slacks and carrying her jacket and purse. If we haven't already noticed how attractive she is, we do now -- standing as she is, framed in the doorway, backlit by the lights of the deserted common room, suddenly sensuous, even voluptuous.

DIANA
(entering the office)
Did you know there are a number of psychics working as licensed brokers on Wall Street?
(she sits across from MAX, fishes a cigarette out of her purse)
Some of them counsel their clients by use of Tarot cards. They're all pretty successful, even in a bear market and selling short. I met one of them a couple of weeks ago and thought of doing a show around her -- The Wayward Witch of Wall Street, something like that. But, of course, if her tips were any good, she could wreck the market. So I called her this morning and asked her how she was on predicting the future. She said she was occasionally prescient. "For example," she said, "I just had a fleeting vision of you sitting in an office with a craggy middle-aged man with whom you are or will be emotionally involved."
And here I am.

MAX
She does all this with Tarot cards?

DIANA
No, this one operates on parapsychology. She has trance-like episodes and feels things in her energy field. I think this lady can be very useful to you, Max.

MAX
In what way?

DIANA
Well, you put on news shows, and here's someone who can predict tomorrow's news for you. Her name, aptly enough, is Sibyl. Sybil the Soothsayer. You could give her two minutes of trance at the end of a Howard Beale show, say once a week, Friday, which is
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
suggestively occult, and she could oraculate. Then next week, everyone tunes in to see how good her predictions were.

MAX
Maybe she could do the weather.

DIANA
(smiles)
Your network news show is going to need some help, Max, if it's going to hold. Beale doesn't do the angry man thing well at all. He's too kvetchy. He's being irascible. We want a prophet, not a curmudgeon. He should do more apocalyptic doom. I think you should take on a couple of writers to write some jeremiads for him. I see you don't fancy my suggestions.

MAX
Hell, you're not being serious, are you?

DIANA
Oh, I'm serious. The fact is, I could make your Beale show the highest-rated news show in television, if you'd let me have a crack at it.

MAX
What do you mean, have a crack at it?

DIANA
I'd like to program it for you, develop it. I wouldn't interfere with the actual news. But teevee is show biz, Max, and even the News has to have a little showmanship.

MAX
My God, you are serious.

DIANA
I watched your six o'clock news today -- it's straight tabloid. You had a minute and a half on
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
that lady riding a bike naked in Central Park. On the other hand, you had less than a minute of hard national and international news. It was all sex, scandal, brutal crimes, sports, children with incurable diseases and lost puppies. So I don't think I'll listen to any protestations of high standards of journalism. You're right down in the street soliciting audiences like the rest of us. All I'm saying is, if you're going to hustle, at least do it right. I'm going to bring this up at tomorrow's network meeting, but I don't like network hassles, and I was hoping you and I could work this out between us. That's why I'm here right now.

MAX
(sighs)
And I was hoping you were looking for an emotional involvement with a craggy middle-aged man.

DIANA
I wouldn't rule that out entirely.

They appraise each other for a moment; clearly, there are the possibilities of something more than a professional relationship here.

MAX
Well, Diana, you bring all your ideas up at the meeting tomorrow. Because, if you don't, I will. I think Howard is making a goddam fool of himself, and so does everybody Howard and I know in this industry. It was a fluke. It didn't work. Tomorrow, Howard goes back to the old format and this gutter depravity comes to an end.

DIANA
(smiles, stands)
Okay.

She leans forward to flick her ash into MAX's desk ash tray. Half-shaded as she is by the cone of light

issuing from the desk lamp, it is nipple-clear she is bra-less, and MAX cannot help but note the assertive swells of her body. DIANA moves languidly to the door and would leave but MAX suddenly says:

MAX
I don't get it, Diana. You hung around till half-past seven and came all the way down here just to pitch a couple of looney show biz ideas when you knew goddam well I'd laugh you out of this office. I don't get it. What's your scam in this anyway?

DIANA moves back to the desk and crushes her cigarette out in the desk tray.

DIANA
Max, I don't know why you suddenly changed your mind about resigning, but I do know Hackett's going to throw you out on your ass in January. My little visit here tonight was just a courtesy made out of respect for your stature in the industry and because I've personally admired you ever since I was a kid majoring in speech at the University of Missouri. But sooner or later, now or in January, with or without you, I'm going to take over your network news show, and I figured I might as well start tonight.

MAX
I think I once gave a lecture at the University of Missouri.

DIANA
I was in the audience. I had a terrible schoolgirl crush on you for a couple of months.

She smiles, glides to the doorway again.

MAX
Listen, if we can get back for a moment to that gypsy who predicted all that about

(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
emotional involvements and middle-aged men -- what're you doing for dinner tonight?

DIANA pauses in the doorway, and then moves back briskly to the desk, picks up the telephone receiver, taps out a telephone number, waits for a moment --

DIANA
(on phone)
I can't make it tonight, luv, call me tomorrow.

She returns the receiver to its cradle, looks at MAX; their eyes lock.

MAX
Do you have any favorite restaurant?

DIANA
I eat anything.

MAX
Son of a bitch, I get the feeling I'm being made.

DIANA
You sure are.

MAX
I better warn you I don't do anything on the first date.

DIANA
We'll see.

She moves for the door. MAX stares down at his desk.

MAX
(mutters)
Schmuck, what're you getting into?

He sighs, stands, flicks off his desk lamp.

74. INT: A RESTAURANT 74.

MAX and DIANA at the end of their dinner. In fact, MAX is flagging a WAITER for two coffees, black --

DIANA
(plying away at her ice cream)
You're married, surely.

MAX
Twenty-six years. I have a married daughter in Seattle who's six months pregnant, and a younger girl who starts at Northwestern in January.

DIANA
-- Well, Max, here we are -- middle-aged man reaffirming his middle-aged manhood and a terrified young woman with a father complex. What sort of script do you think we can make out of this?

MAX
Terrified, are you?

DIANA
(pushes her ice cream away, regards him affably)
Terrified out of my skull, man. I'm the hip generation, man, right on, cool, groovy, the greening of America, man, remember all that? God, what humbugs we were. In my first year at college, I lived in a commune, dropped acid daily, joined four radical groups and fucked myself silly on a bare wooden floor while somebody chanted Sufi suras. I lost six weeks of my sophomore year because they put me away for trying to jump off the top floor of the Administration Building. I've been on the top floor ever since. Don't open any windows around me because I just might jump out. Am I scaring you off?

MAX
No.

DIANA
I was married for four years and pretended to be happy and had six years of analysis and pretended to be sane. My husband ran off with his boyfriend, and I had an affair with my analyst. He told
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
me I was the worst lay he had ever had. I can't tell you how many men have told me what a lousy lay I am. I apparently have a masculine temperament. I arouse quickly, consummate prematurely, and can't wait to get my clothes back on and get out of that bedroom. I seem to be inept at everything except my work. I'm goddam good at my work and so I confine myself to that. All I want out of life is a 30 share and a 20 rating.

The WAITER brings the coffee.

MAX
(sipping coffee)
The corridor gossip says you're Frank Hackett's backstage girl.

DIANA
(sipping coffee, smiles)
I'm not. Frank's a corporation man, body and soul. He surrendered his spirit to C. C. and A. years ago. He's a marketing-merchandising-management machine, precision-tooled for corporate success. He's married to one C. C. and A. board member's daughter, he attends another board member's church, his children aged two and five are already enrolled in a third board member's alma mater. He has no loves, lusts or allegiances that are not consummately directed towards becoming a C. C. and A. board member himself. So why should he bother with me? I'm not even a stockholder.

MAX
How about your loves, lusts and allegiances?

They smile at each other.

DIANA
Is your wife in town?

MAX
Yes.

DIANA
Well, then, we better go to my place.

75. INT: DIANA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM 75.

Dark. Blinds drawn. MAX and DIANA lying naked on a maelstrom of sheets, both still puffing from what must have been an ebullient bout in the sack --

DIANA
Wow, and you were the guy who kept telling me how he was going to be a grandfather in three months.

MAX
Hell, you were the girl who kept telling me what a lousy lay she was.

She bounces out of bed and stands naked in the shadowed darkness, arms akimbo, looking happily down at MAX on the bed.

DIANA
All right, enough of this love-making. Are you going to let me take over your network news show or not?

MAX
(laughs)
Forget it. Tomorrow, Howard Beale goes back to being a straight anchorman. I'll tell him first thing tomorrow morning.

76. INT: HOWARD BEALE'S BEDROOM 76.

HOWARD BEALE, fast asleep in his dark, empty, hushed room.

HOWARD
(suddenly)
I can't hear you. You'll have to speak a little louder.

He gets up on one elbow, eyes still closed, cocks his head as if he were listening to someone mumbling from the rocking chair across the room.

HOWARD (Contd)
You're kidding. How the hell would I know what the truth is?

He sits up, gets out of bed, walks around and perches on the foot of the bed, stares at the empty rocker, nods his head as if he is following a complicated argument --

HOWARD (Contd)
What the hell is this, the burning bush? For God's sake, I'm not Moses --

Whoever he thinks he is talking to apparently gets up and crosses the room to the overstuffed chair and sits there, since HOWARD follows this movement with his eyes and finally gets up and perches on the side of his bed in order to continue the curious conversation.

HOWARD (Contd)
Why me? I'm a deteriorating old man.

HOWARD listens, sighs, shrugs:

HOWARD
Okay.

77. EXT: UBS BUILDING - TUESDAY, OCT. 1, 9:00 A.M. - DAY 77.

Bright sunny day to establish the next morning.

78. INT: ROOM 517 - NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM 78.

MAX enters. The usual morning hum of activity. PHONES RING. HARRY HUNTER, going over some wire releases with his HEAD WRITER, looks up as MAX approaches --

MAX
Howard in his office?
(HUNTER nods)
Harry, I'm killing this whole screwball angry prophet thing. We're going back to straight news as of tonight's show.

HUNTER
Okay.

MAX veers off for --

79. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE 79.

HOWARD at his typewriter, clicking away. MAX leans in through the open doorway --

MAX
Howard, we're going back to straight news tonight. You don't have to be the mad propnet any more.

HOWARD turns to regard MAX in the doorway with a sweet smile.

HOWARD
I must go on with what I'm doing, Max. I have been called. This is my witness, and I must make it.

This gives MAX pause, to say the least.

MAX
You must make what, Howard?

HOWARD
I must make my witness. I must lead the people from the waters. I must stay their stampede to the sea.

MAX takes a step into the office and closes the door.

MAX
You must stay their what, Howard?

HOWARD
I must stay their headlong suicidal stampede to the sea.

MAX
(regards Howard for a moment)
Well, hallelujah, Howard, are you putting me on or have you flipped or what?

HOWARD
(serenely)
I have heard voices, Max.

MAX
You have heard voices. Swell. What kind of voices, Howard?
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
Still small voices in the night
or the mighty thunder of God?
Howard, you've finally done it.
You've gone over the edge.
You're nuts.

HOWARD
I have been called. This is
my witness, and I must make it.

MAX
Not on my goddam network news
show.

He opens the door, goes back into --

80. INT: NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM 80.

-- where he stops, turns and wheels back to HOWARD's office --

MAX
Now, look, Howard, I'm not
kidding around about this.
You go back to being a straight
anchorman tonight. I'm the
voice you're hearing now, and
this voice is telling you
we're doing a straight news
show from now on. Okay?

HOWARD seems not to have heard him, continues pecking away at his typewriter. MAX scowls, turns, exits --

81. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM 81.

The wall CLOCK says 6:29. The control room STAFF are all at their posts murmuring away. HARRY HUNTER is on the phone --

HUNTER
(muttering into phone)
Max, I'm telling you he's fine.
He's been sharp all day, he's
been funny as hell. He had
everybody cracking up at the
rundown meeting ... I told him,
I told him ...

82. 82.

On the SHOW MONITOR, HOWARD BEALE at his desk, shuffles his papers, looks up for his cue. The wall CLOCK clicks to 6:30, the DIRECTOR murmurs into

his mike. HOWARD looks out from the screen to his vast audience and says:

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Last night, I was awakened from a fitful sleep at shortly after two o'clock in the morning by a shrill, sibilant, faceless voice that was sitting in my rocking chair. I couldn't make it out at first in the dark bedroom. I said: "I'm sorry, you'll have to talk a little louder." And the Voice said to me: "I want you to tell the people the truth, not an easy thing to do; because the people don't want to know the truth." I said: "You're kidding. How the hell would I know what the truth is?" I mean, you have to picture me sitting there on the foot of the bed talking to an empty rocking chair. I said to myself: "Howard, you are some kind of banjo-brain sitting here talking to an empty chair." But the Voice said to me: "Don't worry about the truth. I'll put the words in your mouth." And I said: "What is this, the burning bush? For God's sake, I'm not Moses." And the Voice said to me: "And I'm not God, what's that got to do with it -- "

83. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM 83.

HARRY HUNTER still on the phone as the rest of the control room STAFF just sit there staring at HOWARD on the MONITOR --

HUNTER
(on phone)
What do you want me to do? --

84. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 84.

MAX behind his desk on his phone, chin cupped in his right hand, staring glumly at HOWARD on his CONSOLE --

MAX
(on phone)
Nothing --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
And the Voice said to me: "We're not talking about eternal truth or absolute truth or ultimate truth! We're talking about impermanent, transient, human truth! I don't expect you people to be capable of truth! But, goddamit, you're at least capable of self-preservation! That's good enough! I want you to go out and tell the people to preserve themselves -- "

MAX
(mutters on phone)
Right now, I'm trying to remember the name of that psychiatrist that took care of him when his wife died --

85. INT: STUDIO - NETWORK NEWS 85.

TIGHT SHOT OF HOWARD, his voice rising, his eyes glowing with increasing fervor --

HOWARD
(growing fervor)
And I said to the Voice: "Why me?" And the Voice said: "Because you're on television, dummy! -- "

86. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE 86.

DIANA watching HOWARD on her CONSOLE --

DIANA
Beautiful!

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
"You have forty million Americans listening to you; after tonight's show, you could have fifty million. For Pete's sake, I don't expect you to walk the land in sackcloth and ashes preaching the Armageddon. You're on TeeVee, man! -- "

87. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 87.

MAX, no longer on the phone, is leafing through a loose-leaf address book --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
So I thought about it for a moment --

MAX taps out a telephone number on his private line --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE) (Contd)
And then I said: "Okay -- "

MAX
(on phone)
Doctor Sindell? My name is Max Schumacher, I'm at the Union Broadcasting Systems, and I hope you remember me, I'm a friend of Howard Beale whom you treated for a few months last year --

88. INT: FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR 88.

as HOWARD and HARRY HUNTER, followed by the rest of the control room STAFF, come out of the stairway and head down the corridor to --

89. INT: ROOM 517 - NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM 89.

where HUNTER and HOWARD move towards HOWARD's office while the rest of the control room CREW disperse to their own desks and to exchange muttered comments with those Nightly News PERSONNEL still at their desks. HOWARD walks straight as a ramrod, eyes uplifted, serene to the point of beatitude. He and HUNTER go into --

90. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE 90.

where MAX is sitting, waiting on the couch. He stands --

MAX
Close the door, Harry --

HUNTER does so.

MAX (Contd)
Sit down, Howard. Howard, I'm taking you off the air. I called your psychiatrist.

HOWARD
(serene, sits behind his desk)
What's happening to me, Max, isn't mensurate in psychiatric terms.

MAX
I think you're having a breakdown, require treatment, and Dr. Sindell agrees.

HOWARD
This is not a psychotic episode. It is a cleansing moment of clarity.
(stands, an imbued man)
I am imbued, Max. I am imbued with some special spirit. It's not a religious feeling at all. It is a shocking eruption of great electrical energy! I feel vivid and flashing as if suddenly I had been plugged into some great cosmic electromagnetic field. I feel connected to all living things, to flowers, birds, to all the animals of the world and even to some great unseen living force, what I think the Hindus call prana.
(he stands rigidily erect, his eyes staring mindlessly out, his face revealing the anguish of so transcendental a state)
It is not a breakdown. I have never felt so orderly in my life! It is a shattering and beautiful sensation! It is the exalted flow of the space-time continuum, save that it is spaceless and timeless and of such loveliness! I feel on the verge of some great ultimate truth.
(he stares haggardly at MAX, his breath coming with great difficulty now; he shouts)
You will not take me off the air for now or for any other spaceless time!

He promptly falls in a dead swoon onto the floor.

MAX
(hurrying to his friend's prostrate form)
Jesus Christ --

HUNTER
(from the door)
Is he okay?

MAX
(bent over HOWARD)
He's breathing anyway. I'll have to take him to my house again for the night --

A CRASH OF THUNDER --

91. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 91.

THUNDER CRASHES outside. RAIN pelts against the windows. The room is dark. MAX and his wife, LOUISE, are fast asleep in their hushed room. CAMERA PANS, DOLLIES slowly out of the bedroom and into --

92. INT: LIVING ROOM 92.

Dark, hushed, sleeping. HOWARD is asleep on the living room couch. Or rather he was asleep, for he now slowly sits up, then stands in his borrowed pajamas, goes to the hall closet, fetches out a raincoat, unchains, unbolts and unlocks the front door of the apartment, and goes out --

93. EXT: A STREET IN THE EAST 60'S - OVERCAST DAY 93.
- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2 - 7:30 A.M.

Another CRASH and RUMBLE of THUNDER. RAIN slashes through the streets. The sky is dark and lowering --

94. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM 94.

ALARM CLOCK BUZZING. MRS. LOUISE SCHUMACHER, a handsome matron of 50, clicks it off and gets out of bed. MAX turns in the bed, sleeps on. THUNDER and RAIN o.s. LOUISE starts sleepily for the bathroom, pauses, then goes out into the --

INT: BACK HALLWAY

-- and down that to --

INT: LIVING ROOM

-- where she stands, frowning. The couch, which had been made up for a bed, has clearly been slept in but is now empty. She looks back up the hallway to the guest bathroom. The door is open, and there is obviously nobody in the bathroom. She pads across the living room-dining room area and pokes her head into the kitchen, and then back to the back hallway,

pauses a moment outside her daughter's closed bedroom door, opens it, looks in, closes it and then returns to --

INT: THE BEDROOM

She sits on MAX's side of the bed, shakes him awake.

LOUISE
Wake up, Max, because Howard's gone. I'll make you some coffee.

She moves off.

MAX
(mutters)
Shit.

He slowly sits up.

95. INT: FRANK HACKETT'S OFFICE 95.

HACKETT in a rage, shouting at MAX slumped in a soft chair. Others in the room are DIANA and HERB THACKERAY.

HACKETT
(rage)
What do you mean you don't know where he is? The son of a bitch is a hit, goddammit! Over two thousand phone calls! Go down to the mailroom! As of this minute, over fourteen thousand telegrams! The response is sensational! Herb, tell him! --
(THACKERAY starts to tell him, but HACKETT roars on)
Herb's phone hasn't stopped ringing! Every goddam affiliate from Albuquerque to Sandusky! The response is sensational!
(the PHONE RINGS, HACKETT seizes it)
What? ... All right ...
(he hangs up, snaps at THACKERAY)
It's your office, Herb. You better get back there.

THACKERAY exits. HACKETT roars on --

HACKETT (Contd)
Moldanian called me! Joe Donnelly called me! We've got a goddam hit, goddam it! Diana, show him the Times! We even got an editorial in the holy goddam New York Times. "A Call to Morality!" That crazy son of a bitch, Beale, has caught on! So don't tell me you don't know where he is!

MAX
(roaring back)
I don't know where he is! He may be jumping off a roof for all I know. The man is insane. He's no longer responsible for himself. He needs care and treatment. And all you graverobbers care about is he's a hit!

DIANA
You know, Max, it's just possible that he isn't insane, that he is, in fact, imbued with some special spirit.

MAX
My God, I'm supposed to be the romantic; you're supposed to be the hard-bitten realist!

DIANA
All right. Howard Beale obviously fills a void. The audience out there obviously wants a prophet, even a manufactured one, even if he's as mad as Moses. By tomorrow, he'll have a 50 share, maybe even a 60 share. Howard Beale is processed instant God, and right now it looks like he may just go over bigger than Mary Tyler Moore.

MAX
I'm not putting Howard back on the air.

DIANA
It's not your show any more, Max, it's mine.

MAX
You're nuts. You're nuttier than Howard!

HACKETT
I gave her the show, Schumacher. I'm putting the network news show under programming. Mr. Ruddy has had a mild heart attack and is not taking calls. In his absence, I'm making all network decisions, including one I've been wanting to make a long time -- you're fired. I want you out of this building by noon. I'll leave word with the security guards to throw you out if you're still here.

MAX
Well, let's just say, fuck you, Hackett. You want me out, you're going to have to drag me out kicking and screaming. And the whole news division will walk out kicking and screaming with me.

HACKETT
You think they're going to quit their jobs for you? Not in this depression, buddy.

MAX
When Ruddy gets back, he'll have your ass.

HACKETT
I got a hit, Schumacher, and Ruddy doesn't count any more. He was hoping I'd fall on my face with this Beale show, but I didn't. It's a big, fat, big-titted hit, and I don't have to waffle around with Ruddy any more. If he wants to take me up before the C. C. and A. board, let him. All they know at C. C. and A. is they've got a network that's in the shithouse for a hundred and three million dollars, and I'm going to hand them this demented Howard Beale show that's going to put this

(MORE)

HACKETT (Contd)
network into profit. Do you think Ruddy's stupid enough to go to the C. C. and A. board and say: "I'm taking our one hit show off the air?" And comes November Fourteen, I'm going to be standing up there at the annual C. C. and A. management review meeting, and I'm going to announce projected earnings for this network for the first time in five years. And, believe me, Mr. Jensen will be sitting there rocking back and forth in his little chair, and he's going to say: "That's very good, Frank, keep it up." So don't have any illusions about who's running this network from now on. You're fired. I want you out of your office before noon or I'll have you thrown out.

MAX
(to DIANA)
And you go along with this?

DIANA
Well, Max, I told you I didn't want a network hassle over this. I told you I'd much rather work the Beale show out just between the two of us.

MAX
(stands)
Well, let's just say, fuck you too, honey.
(to HACKETT)
Howard Beale may be my best friend! I'll go to court. I'll put him in a hospital before I let you exploit him like a carnival freak.

HACKETT
You get your psychiatrists, and I'll get mine.

MAX
(heading for the door)
I'm going to spread this whole
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
reeking business in every paper and on every network, independent, group, and affiliated station in this country. I'm going to make a lot of noise about this.

HACKETT
Great! We need all the press we can get.

MAX exits. HACKETT clicks his intercom.

HACKETT (Contd)
(on intercom)
Get me Mr. Cabell --
(to DIANA)
Something going on between you and Schumacher?

DIANA
(sighs)
Not any more.

HACKETT
(his PHONE BUZZES, he picks it up)
Tom, Howard Beale has disappeared. Tell Harriman to prepare a big statement for the news media. And call the cops and tell them to find the crazy son of a bitch --

96. EXT: UBS BUILDING - SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT - 6:40 P.M. 96.

THUNDER CRASHES -- RAIN lashes the street. PEDESTRIANS struggle against the slashing rain. The streets gleam wetly, the heavy TRAFFIC heading uptown crushes and HONKS along, erratic enfilades of headlights in the shiny, black streets --

97. CLOSER ANGLE 97.

of entrance to UBS Building. HOWARD BEALE, wearing a coat over his pajamas, drenched to the skin, his mop of gray hair plastered in streaks to his brow, hunched against the rain, climbs the steps and pushes the glass door at the entrance and goes into --

98. INT: UBS BUILDING - LOBBY 98.

TWO SECURITY GUARDS at the desk watch HOWARD pass --

SECURITY GUARD
How do you do, Mr. Beale?

HOWARD stops, turns, stares haggardly at the SECURITY GUARD.

HOWARD
(mad as a loon)
I have to make my witness.

SECURITY GUARD
(an agreeable fellow)
Sure thing, Mr. Beale.

HOWARD plods off to the elevators.

99. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM 99.

Murmured, efficient activity as in previous scenes. DIANA stands in the back in the shadows. On the SHOW MONITOR, JACK SNOWDEN, BEALE's replacement, has been doing the news straight --

SNOWDEN (ON CONSOLE)
... the Vice President designate was on the road today and stopped off in Provo, Utah, and, in a speech in the basketball arena at Brigham Young University --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Five seconds --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Twenty-five in Provo --

DIRECTOR
And ... two --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
Mr. Rockefeller had some strong words to say about the Arab oil-producing nations. More on that story from Edward Douglas --

All this is UNDER and OVERLAPPED by HARRY HUNTER answering a BUZZ on his phone --

HUNTER
(on phone)
Yeah? ... Okay --
(hangs up, to DIANA)
He came in the building about five minutes ago.

DIRECTOR
Get ready to roll her --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Ten seconds coming to one --

DIANA
Tell Snowden if he comes in the studio to let him go on.

HUNTER
(to the DIRECTOR)
Did you get that, Gene?

The DIRECTOR nods, passes on the instructions to his A.D. on the studio floor. On the SHOW MONITOR, we are seeing footage of Rockefeller crowding his way to the speaker's rostrum, and we are hearing the VOICE of Edward Douglas in Provo, Utah --

DOUGLAS
(on the phone)
This was Rockefeller's first public appearance since he was named Vice President designate, and he spoke sharply about inflation and high Arab oil prices --

On the SHOW MONITOR, Rockefeller flips onto the screen to say --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the political impact on inflation is the action by the OPEC countries and the Arab oil countries in arbitrarily raising the price of oil four hundred percent --

Nobody in the control room is paying too much attention to Rockefeller; they are all watching the double bank of black-and-white monitors which show HOWARD BEALE entering the studio, drenched, hunched, staring gauntly off into his own space, moving with single-minded purpose across the studio floor past cameras and cables and nervous CAMERAMEN, SOUND MEN, ELECTRICIANS, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS and ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS, to his desk which is being vacated for him by JACK SNOWDEN. On the SHOW MONITOR, the film clip on Rockefeller has come to an end.

DIRECTOR
And one --

-- and, suddenly, the obsessed face of HOWARD BEALE, gaunt, haggard, red-eyed with unworldly fervor, hair streaked and plastered on his brow, manifestly mad, fills the MONITOR SCREEN.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I don't have to tell you things are bad. Everybody knows things are bad. It's a depression. Everybody's out of work or scared of losing their job, the dollar buys a nickel's worth, banks are going bust, shopkeepers keep a gun under the counter, punks are running wild in the streets, and there's nobody anywheres who seems to know what to do, and there's no end to it. We know the air's unfit to breathe and our food is unfit to eat, and we sit and watch our tee-vees while some local newscaster tells us today we had fifteen homicides and sixty-three violent crimes, as if that's the way it's supposed to be. We all know things are bad. Worse than bad. They're crazy. It's like everything's going crazy. So we don't go out any more. We sit in the house, and slowly the world we live in gets smaller, and all we ask is please, at least leave us alone in our own living rooms. Let me have my toaster and my tee-vee and my hair-dryer and my steel-belted radials, and I won't say anything, just leave us alone. Well, I'm not going to leave you alone. I want you to get mad --

ANOTHER ANGLE showing the rapt attention of the PEOPLE in the control room, especially of DIANA --

HOWARD (Contd)
I don't want you to riot. I don't want you to protest. I don't want you to write your congressmen. Because I wouldn't know what to tell you to write. I don't know what to do about the depression and the inflation and the defense budget and the Russians
(MORE)

HOWARD (Contd)
and crime in the street. All I know is first you got to get mad. You've got to say: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more. I'm a human being, goddammit. My life has value." So I want you to get up now. I want you to get out of your chairs and go to the window. Right now. I want you to go to the window, open it, and stick your head out and yell. I want you to yell: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!"

DIANA
(grabs HUNTER's shoulder)
How many stations does this go out live to?

HUNTER
Sixty-seven. I know it goes out to Atlanta and Louisville, I think --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- Get up from your chairs. Go to the window. Open it. Stick your head out and yell and keep yelling --

But DIANA has already left the control room and is scurrying down --

100. INT: CORRIDOR 100.

-- yanking doors open, looking for a phone, which she finds in --

101. INT: AN OFFICE 101.

DIANA
(seizing the phone)
Give me Stations Relations --
(the call goes through)
Herb, this is Diana Christenson, are you watching because I want you to call every affiliate carrying this live -- ... I'll be right up --

102. INT: ELEVATOR AREA - FIFTEENTH FLOOR 102.

DIANA bursts out of the just-arrived elevator and strides down to where a clot of EXECUTIVES and OFFICE PERSONNEL are blocking an open doorway. DIANA pushes through to --

103. INT: THACKERAY'S OFFICE - STATIONS RELATIONS 103.

HERB THACKERAY on the phone, staring up at HOWARD BEALE on his wall monitor --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- First, you have to get mad. When you're mad enough --

Both THACKERAY'S SECRETARY's office and his own office are filled with his STAFF. The Assistant VP Stations Relations, a 32-year-old fellow named RAY PITOFSKY, is at the SECRETARY's desk, also on the phone. Another ASSISTANT VP is standing behind him on the SECRETARY's other phone --

DIANA
(shouting to THACKERAY)
Whom are you talking to?

THACKERAY
WCGG, Atlanta --

DIANA
Are they yelling in Atlanta, Herb?

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
-- we'll figure out what to do about the depression --

THACKERAY
(on phone)
Are they yelling in Atlanta, Ted?

104. INT: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE - UBS AFFILIATE - ATLANTA 104.

The GENERAL MANAGER of WCGG, Atlanta, a portly 58-year-old man, is standing by the open windows of his office, staring out into the gathering dusk, holding his phone. The station is located in an Atlanta suburb, but from far off across the foliage surrounding the station, there can be heard a faint RUMBLE. On his office console, HOWARD BEALE is saying --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
-- and the inflation and the oil crisis --

GENERAL MANAGER
(into phone)
Herb, so help me, I think they're yelling --

105. INT: THACKERAY'S OFFICE 105.

PITOFSKY
(at SECRETARY's desk, on the phone)
They're yelling in Baton Rouge.

DIANA grabs the phone from him and listens to the people of Baton Rouge yelling their anger in the streets --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
-- Things have got to change. But you can't change them unless you're mad. You have to get mad. Go to the window --

DIANA
(gives phone back to PITOFSKY; her eyes glow with excitement)
The next time somebody asks you to explain what ratings are, you tell them: that's ratings!
(exults)
Son of a bitch, we struck the mother lode!

106. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM 106.

MAX, MRS. SCHUMACHER, and their 17-year-old daughter, CAROLINE, watching the Network News Show --

HOWARD (ON THE SET)
-- Stick your head out and yell. I want you to yell: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!"

CAROLINE gets up from her chair and heads for the living room window.

LOUISE SCHUMACHER
Where are you going?

CAROLINE
I want to see if anybody's yelling.

HOWARD (ON TV SET)
Right now. Get up. Go to your window --

107. 107.

CAROLINE opens the window and looks out on the rain-swept streets of the upper East Side, the bulking, anonymous apartment houses and the occasional brownstones. It is thunder dark; a distant clap of THUNDER CRASHES somewhere off and LIGHTNING shatters the dank darkness. In the sudden HUSH following the thunder, a thin voice down the block can be heard shouting:

THIN VOICE (O.S.)
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

HOWARD (ON TV SET)
-- open your window --

MAX joins his daughter at the window. RAIN sprays against his face --

108. MAX'S P.O.V. 108.

He sees occasional windows open, and, just across from his apartment house, a MAN opens the front door of a brownstone --

MAN
(shouts)
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

OTHER SHOUTS are heard. From his twenty-third floor vantage point, MAX sees the erratic landscape of Manhattan buildings for some blocks, and, silhouetted HEADS in window after window, here, there, and then seemingly everywhere, SHOUTING out into the slashing black RAIN of the streets --

VOICES
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

A terrifying enormous CLAP of natural THUNDER, followed by a frantic brilliant FULGURATION of LIGHTNING; and now the gathering CHORUS of scattered SHOUTS seems to be coming from the whole, huddled, black horde of the

city's people, SCREAMING together in fury, an indistinguishable tidal roar of human rage as formidable as the natural THUNDER again ROARING, THUNDERING, RUMBLING above. It sounds like a Nuremberg rally, the air thick and trembling with it —

109. FULL SHOT - MAX 109.

standing with his DAUGHTER by the open terrace window-doors, RAIN spraying against them, listening to the stupefying ROARS and THUNDERING rising from all around him. He closes his eyes, sighs, there's nothing he can do about it any more, it's out of his hands.

110. EXT: LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16 - 12:00 NOON - DAY 110.

A jumbo 747 touches down at L.A. Airport --

NARRATION
By mid-October, the Howard Beale show had settled in at a 42 share, more than equalling all the other network news shows combined --

111. 111.

DIANA and BARBARA SCHLESINGER, carrying attache cases, scripts, hand baggage, deplane --

NARRATION
In the September rating book, the Howard Beale show was listed as the fourth highest-rated show of the month, surpassed only by All in the Family, Rhoda, and Chico and the Man -- a phenomenal state of affairs for a news program —

112. EXT: UBS BUILDING - L.A. - DAY 112.

A towering glass building on Santa Monica Boulevard. IDENTIFY.

NARRATION
And, on October the Sixteenth, Diana Christenson flew to Los Angeles --

113. INT: WEST COAST UBS BUILDING - A CONFERENCE ROOM 113.

DIANA at a luncheon meeting (sandwiches and containers

of coffee), with her West Coast Programming Department --

NARRATION
-- for what the trade calls pow-wows and confabs with her West Coast programming execs --

These are FOUR MEN and TWO WOMEN; GLENN KOSSOFF and BARBARA SCHLESINGER; the THREE OTHER MEN are the Assistant VP Program Development West Coast, Head of the Story Department West Coast, and a MAN from Audience Research; the WOMAN is VP Daytime Programming West Coast. They are all sitting around a typical mod-shaped conference table except for DIANA who is moving towards a large display board at the far end of the table stretching the length of the wall. This is an improvised programming "board." It shows -- through movable heavy cardboard pieces -- what all four networks have on by the half hour for all seven days of the week --

DIANA
Wednesday night looks weak on all three of the other networks for next September, so we concentrate on Wednesday night. We're going to expand the Howard Beale show to an hour in January, which'll give us a hell of a lead-in to eight o'clock. So, on Wednesday nights, I want to follow that with two strong dramatic hours, no sit-coms, nothing lightweight --

BILL HERRON pokes his head into the room --

HERRON
(to DIANA)
I've got Laureen Hobbs' lawyer on the phone. Is five-thirty okay, and where would you like to meet, here or at the hotel?

DIANA
(to SCHLESINGER)
Let's put Hy Norman at five --
(to HERRON)
Five-thirty is fine, and at my office, if they don't mind.
(back to her "board" and her exhortation to the programming people)

(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
-- What I want right now are movies of the week we can use for pilots. I want five movies of the week ready by March at the outside, preferably sooner --

114. INT: UBS BUILDING WEST COAST - DIANA'S OFFICE 114.

An utterly bland office kept for visiting firemen. DIANA is behind the desk. BARBARA SCHLESINGER is sitting on the couch. GLENN KOSSOFF is ushering TWO GENTLEMEN out, spots someone in the outer office --

KOSSOFF
(to anteroom)
Hy, come on in --

He ushers in a silver-haired, suntanned, fresh-from-the-tenniscourt man dressed in California elegance, rakish blazer, archetype of all L.A. television packagers -- HY NORMAN --

KOSSOFF (Contd)
Hy, I think you know Barbara Schlesinger, but I don't know if you know Diana Christenson --

NORMAN
(sinking casually into the visitor's chair, crossing his legs, flashing a fully-capped set of teeth)
As a matter of fact, I think we met during the 1972 McGovern-for-President campaign, of which, I am proud to say, I was a principal fund raiser --

DIANA
(leaning across the desk to shake his hand)
No, I'm afraid not. Now, Hy, we're running a little late, so I'd like to get right to it. I have an idea for an hour television series, and I'd like to lay it in your lap. Here's the back-up story. The hero is white-collar middle-class, an architect, aviation engineer, anything, a decent law-abiding man. He lives with his wife and daughter in a large city. His

DIANA (Contd)
wife and daughter are raped and he's mugged. He appeals to the police, but their hands are tied by the Warren Court decisions. There's nothing but pornography in the movies, and vandals bomb his church. The animals are taking over. So he decides to take the law into his own hands. He buys a gun, practices till he's an expert. He takes up karate, becomes a black belt, an adept in Kung Fu and all the other martial arts. Now, he starts walking the streets of the city, decoying muggers into preying on him. He kung fu's them all. Pretty soon, he's joined by a couple of neighbors. What we've got now is a vigilante group. That's the name of the show -- the Vigilantes. The idea is, if the law won't protect the decent people, they have to take the law into their own hands.

NORMAN
That may be he most fascistic idea I've heard in years.

DIANA
Right.

NORMAN
And a shameless steal from a movie called "Death Wish."

DIANA
I know. And, so far, "Death Wish" has grossed seventeen million domestic. It obviously struck a pulse in Americans. I want to strike the same pulse. Now, let me finish, Hy. The format is simple. Every week a crime is committed, and the police are helpless to deal with it. The victim turns to our group of vigilantes. What the hell, it's FBI, Mission Impossible, Kojack, except the heroes are ordinary citizens, your neighbors and mine.

NORMAN
(standing)
I find the whole thing repulsive.

DIANA
You give me a pilot script we can use as a movie of the week for January, and I'll commit to twelve segments on the basis of that script.

NORMAN
(turns)
You'll commit on the basis of the pilot script?

DIANA
That's what I said. That's a three million dollar commitment. I figure you could skim a quarter of a million for yourself out of that. Of course, we all know you're a highly principled political liberal, and you may find this kind of show repulsive --

NORMAN
(slowly sitting again)
Well -- not necessarily. I deplore vigilante tactics, of course, but the vigilante tradition is a profound, even proud tradition in the American social fabric. This sort of program also offers opportunities for coming to grips with the burning issues of our times, to do meaningful drama and at the same time providing mass entertainment.

DIANA
Beautiful, Hy.

NORMAN
Who do I talk numbers with, Charlie Kinkaid?

DIANA
Right. I'll call Charlie and tell him we'll go to forty thousand for the first script. If you come in with anything good, Hy, I'll slot you on Wednesday nights at eight coming right off the Howard Beale Show, and that's the best lead-in you'll ever get.

NORMAN opens the door to leave, looks out into the outer office, closes the door, turns to DIANA.

NORMAN
Is that Laureen Hobbs out there? What the hell is Laureen Hobbs doing out there?

DIANA
We're going to put the Communist Party on prime-time television, Hy.

NORMAN
I wouldn't doubt it for a minute.

115. 115.

He opens the door and goes out. On his heels, GLENN KOSSOFF is already ushering in BILL HERRON, LAUREEN HOBBS, (a handsome black woman of 35 in Afro and dashiki); SAM HAYWOOD, (late 50's, a shaggy, unkempt lawyer in the Clarence Darrow tradition, galluses, string-tie, folksy drawl and all); a younger lawyer, ROBERT MURPHY, (early 30's, Harvard intellectual type); and THREE AGENTS from the William Morris Office named LENNIE, WALLIE and ED, (all in their mid-30's, all wearing trim blue suits and all indistinguishable from each other). DIANA rises to greet them, extends her hand to LAUREEN HOBBS --

DIANA
Christ, you brought half the William Morris West Coast office with you. I'm Diana Christenson, a racist lackey of the imperialist ruling circles.

LAUREEN
I'm Laureen Hobbs, a bad-ass Commie nigger.

DIANA
Sounds like the basis of a firm friendship.
(to KOSSOFF)
We're going to need more chairs --

In b.g., meanwhile, SCHLESINGER is exchanging hellos with the THREE WILLIAM MORRIS AGENTS and is being introduced to the LAWYERS and looking at baby pictures proferred to her by one of the agents. It's all jolly as hell, a lot of chuckling and smiling --

SCHLESINGER
(inb.g.)
Anybody want coffee?

LENNIE
Black with Sucaryl --

KOSSOFF and a SECRETARY are hauling in chairs --

LAUREEN
(introducing to DIANA)
This is my lawyer, Sam Haywood, and his associate, Robert Murphy --

Handshakes, nods, smiles, everybody begins to sit. The SECRETARY goes around taking coffee orders --

HAYWOOD
(an old union lawyer, given to peroration)
Well, Ms. Christenson, just what the hell's this all about? Because when a national television network in the person of bubby here --
(indicates HERRON)
-- comes to me and says he wants to put the ongoing struggle of the oppressed masses on prime-time television, I have to regard this askance --

More chairs are brought in. DIANA would answer HAYWOOD but he booms along, beginning to hit his stride --

HAYWOOD (Contd)
I have to figure this as an antithetical distraction. The thesis here, if you follow me, is that the capitalist state is in a terminal condition now, and the antithesis is the maturation of the fascist state, and when the correlative appendages of the fascist state come and say to me they want to give the revolution a weekly hour of prime-time television, I've got to figure this is preventive co-optation, right? --

The necessary chairs are in by now, and everyone is seated. The SECRETARY has gone off to fetch the coffee. A sudden HUSH follows HAYWOOD's Hegelian instruction, and DIANA would answer, but HAYWOOD is now center-stage, into the full swell of rhetoric --

HAYWOOD (Contd)
The ruling classes are running scared, right? You turned the full
(MORE)

HAYWOOD (Contd)
force of your cossack cops and paramilitary organs of repression against us. But now the slave masters hear the rumble of revolution in their ears. So you have no alternative but to co-opt us. Put us on teevee and pull our fangs. And we're supposed to sell out, right? For your gangster gold? Well, we're not going to sell out, baby! You can take your fascist teevee and shove it right up your paramilitary ass! I'm here to tell you, we don't sell out! We don't want your gold! We're not going on your teevee!

A moment of HUSH, in which everybody digests this opening statement.

DIANA
(sighs, mutters)
Oh, shit, Mr. Haywood, if you're not interested in my offer, why the hell did you bring two lawyers and three agents from the William Morris office along?

MURPHY
(Mr. Cool)
What Mr. Haywood was saying, Ms. Christenson, was that our client, Ms. Hobbs, wants it up front that the political content of the show has to be entirely in her control.

DIANA
She can have it. I don't give a damn about the political content.

WALLIE
What kind of show'd you have in mind, Diana?

DIANA
We're interested in doing a weekly dramatic series based on the Ecumenical Liberation Army, and I'll tell you what the first show has to be -- a two-hour special on Mary Ann Gifford. We open this two-hour special with that bank ripoff footage, which is terrific stuff, and then we tell

(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
the story of how a rich young heiress like Mary Ann Gifford becomes a flaming revolutionary. Would you people be interested in making such a movie for us?

Everybody looks to LAUREEN HOBBS.

LAUREEN
The Ecumenical Liberation Army is an ultra-left sect creating political confusion with wildcat violence and pseudo-insurrectionary acts, which the Communist Party does not endorse. The American masses are not yet ready for open revolt. We would not want to produce a television show celebrating historically deviational terrorism.

DIANA
Even better. I see the story this way. Poor little rich girl kidnapped by ultra-left sect. She falls in love with the leader of the gang, converts to his irresponsible violence. But then she meets you, understands the true nature of the ongoing people's struggle for a better society, and, in an emotion-drenched scene, she leaves her deviational lover and dedicates herself to you and the historical inevitability of the socialist state.

LAUREEN
(smiles)
That would be better, of course.

ED
What kind of numbers are we talking, Diana?

DIANA
We'll give you our top deal, which I think is two fifteen and twenty-five. You'll have to talk to Charlie Kinkaid about that. But as long as we're talking series now, I'll tell you what I want. I want a lot more film like the bank ripoff the Ecumenicals sent
(MORE)

DIANA (Continued)
in. The way I see this series is every week we open with the authentic footage of an act of political terrorism, taken on the spot and in the actual moment; then we go into the drama behind the opening film footage. That's your job, Ms. Hobbs. You've got to get the Ecumenicals to bring in that film for us. The network can't deal with them directly. They are, after all, wanted criminals.

LAUREEN
The Ecumenicals are an undisciplined ultra-left gang, and the leader is an eccentric to say the least. He calls himself the Great Ahmed Khan and wears a hussar's shako.

DIANA
Ms. Hobbs, I'm offering you an hour of prime-time television every week into which you can stick whatever propaganda you want. We're talking about thirty to fifty million people a shot. That's a lot better than handing out mimeographed pamphlets on ghetto street corners.

LAUREEN
I'll have to take this matter to the Central Committee, and I'd better check this out with the Great Ahmed Khan.

DIANA
I'll be in L.A. until Saturday, and I'd like to get this thing rolling.
(smiles at SCHLESINGER, HERRON and KOSSOFF)
That's going to be our Wednesday night. Seven to eight -- Howard Beale; eight to nine -- the Vigilantes; nine to ten -- the Mao Tse Tung Hour.

KOSSOFF
God, fascism and the revolution all on one night.

DIANA
(tired, rubs her eyes)
I suppose that's what's called balanced programming.

116. EXT: LOS ANGELES - WATTS DISTRICT - A GHETTO STREET - NIGHT 116.

LAUREEN HOBBS, sitting on the stoop of a pealing cottage talking to another member of the Central Committee, a middle-aged white man named WITHERSPOON. The door behind them opens, and DOWLING, a young white man in his 20's, wearing a fatigue jacket and torn levis and dark sunglasses, pokes his head out:

DOWLING

Okay --

LAUREEN and WITHERSPOON rise, go up the steps and follow DOWLING into --

117. INT: THE ECUMENICALS' HEADQUARTERS - ENTRANCE FOYER 117.

Dark. An absolute shambles. Cartons, crates, newspapers and scraps of food have been littered about. A young black man, WATKINS, (early 20's, standing on the stairway to the second floor holding an army rifle), watches LAUREEN and WITHERSPOON following DOWLING, and himself follows them into --

118. INT: DINING ROOM 118.

-- or what had been the dining room. A naked overhead BULB is the only light in here. Sitting on a wooden folding chair is the GREAT AHMED KHAN, a powerful, brooding black man in his early 30's. He wears a hussar's shako and the crescent moon of the Midianites hanging pendant around his neck. The chair he sits on is the only visible piece of furniture. There are two tattered sleeping bags on the floor, part of a general welter of torn newspapers, empty grocery bags, hamburger leftovers, etc. The walls are bare except for blowups of Che Guevara, Mao, Marlon Brando and Jane Fonda, scotch-taped to the torn wall-paper. Cartons and crates here and there, automatic guns leaning against the walls. Boxes of ammunition and grenades and mortar shells stacked against a wall. In attendance on the GREAT AHMED KHAN is a young black woman in her late 20's,named JENKINS, and a young white woman in her early 20's, MARY ANN GIFFORD, who is a fire-eating militant with a bandolier of cartridges across her torn shirt and with a B.A.R. held in her hands. LAUREEN pulls up an empty crate, sits, waves a limp hand of hello to the others and regards the GREAT KHAN --

LAUREEN
Well, Ahmed, you ain't going to believe this, but I'm going to make a teevee star out of you. Just like Archie Bunker. You're going to be a household word.

AHMED
What the fuck are you talking about?

MUSIC: A RATAPLAN OF KETTLEDRUMS AND A TARANTARA OF TRUMPETS.

119. INT: UBS BUILDING - NEW YORK - A CONTROL ROOM - MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 1975 119.

Everybody murmuring away --

DIRECTOR
(murmurs into mike)
-- and one --

The Show Monitor cuts to a beaming ANNOUNCER --

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it -- how do you feel?

SHOW MONITOR now shows packed AUDIENCE happily roaring:

AUDIENCE
(roaring out)
We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take this any more!

120. INT: THE STUDIO 120.

The ANNOUNCER beaming away in front of a curtain --

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentlemen! The Network News Hour! --

121. INT: CONTROL ROOM 121.

The SHOW MONITOR --

ANNOUNCER (ON MONITOR)
-- with Sybil the Soothsayer, Jim Webbing and his It's-the-Emmes-Truth Department, Miss Mata Hari, tonight another segment of Vox Populi, and starring --

MUSIC: A FLOURISH OF DRUMS.

ANNOUNCER (Contd)
-- the mad prophet of the airways, Howard Beale! --

MUSIC: A FULL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SOARS INTO AN IMPERIAL CRESCENDO --

122. 122.

-- as the HOUSELIGHTS go to BLACK. The curtain slowly rises. An absolutely bare stage except for one stained glass window, suspended by wires high above stage left through which shoots an overpowering SHAFT of LIGHT as if emanating from heaven. HOWARD BEALE, in an austere black suit with black tie shambles on from the wings, finds the SPOTLIGHT and stands there for a moment shielding his eyes from the blinding light. TUMULTUOUS APPLAUSE from the AUDIENCE.

HOWARD
(erupts into a Savanarola-type tirade)
Edward George Ruddy died today! Edward George Ruddy was the Chairman of the Board of the Union Broadcasting Systems -- the company that owns this network -- and he died at eleven o'clock this morning of a heart condition! And woe is us, we're in a lot of trouble! So a rich little man with white hair died, what's that got to do with the price of rice, right? Why is that woe to us! Because you and sixty-two million other Americans are watching me right now, that's why! Because less than three percent of you people read books! Because less than fifteen percent of you read newspapers! Because the only truth you know is what you get over this tube! There is a whole and entire generation right now who never knew anything that didn't come out of this tube! This tube is the gospel! This tube is the ultimate revelation! This tube can make or break presidents, popes, and prime ministers! This tube is the most awesome goddamned force in the whole godless world!

(MORE)

HOWARD (Contd)
And woe is us if it ever falls in the hands of the wrong people. And that's why woe is us that Edward George Ruddy died. Because this network is now in the hands of CC and A the Communications Corporation of America. We've got a new Chairman of the Board, a man named Frank Hackett now sitting in Mr. Ruddy's office on the twentieth floor. And when the twelfth largest company in the world controls the most awesome goddamned propaganda force in the whole godless world, who knows what shit will be peddled for truth on this tube? So, listen to me! Television is not the truth! Television is a goddamned amusement park, that's what television is! Television is a circus, a carnival, a travelling troupe of acrobats and story-tellers, singers and dancers, jugglers, side-show freaks, lion-tamers and football players. We're in the boredom-killing business! If you want truth, go to God, go to your guru, go to yourself because that's the only place you'll ever find any real truth! But, man, you're never going to get any truth from us. We'll tell you anything you want to hear. We lie like hell! We'll tell you Kojack always gets the killer, and nobody ever gets cancer in Archie Bunker's house. And no matter how much trouble the hero is in, don't worry: just look at your watch -- at the end of the hour, he's going to win. We'll tell you any shit you want to hear! We deal in illusion, man! None of it's true! But you people sit there -- all of you -- day after day, night after night, all ages, colors, creeds -- we're all you know. You're beginning to believe this illusion we're spinning here. You're beginning to think the tube is reality and your own lives are unreal. You do whatever the tube tells you. You dress like the tube, you eat like

(MORE)

HOWARD (Contd)
the tube, you raise your children like the tube, you think like the tube. This is mass madness, you maniacs! In God's name, you people are the real thing! We're the illusions! So turn off this goddam set! Turn it off right now! Turn it off and leave it off. Turn it off right now, right in the middle of this very sentence I'm speaking now --

At which point, HOWARD BEALE, sweating and red-eyed with his prophetic rage, collapses to the floor in a prophetic swoon.

123. INT: CC AND A CONFERENCE ROOM - CC AND A BUILDING - MONDAY, JANUARY 27 123.

A Valhalla of a room taking up the 43rd and 44th floors of the CC and A Building. It is dark and theatrical, the lighting at the moment being provided by the shaft of LIGHT issuing from a slide projector at the back of the room onto a large SCREEN on the raised podium where FRANK HACKETT in banker's gray stands making his annual report. On the SCREEN, we see charts of figures, one after the other, which accompany HACKETT's explication. A little red ARROW darts from one figure to another as HACKETT drones on. Seated in a semi-circular arrangement like a miniature United Nations are 214 SENIOR EXECUTIVES, (late 40's, 50's, and 60's). They each have their own little desks with swivel chairs, pin-spot lights, piles of bound company reports, and name-plates giving their names and companies they represent. NOTE one specific CHAIR in the dead center of the first row that swivels back and forth, back and forth --

HACKETT
(on podium)
-- UBS was running at a cash-flow breakeven point after taking into account one hundred and ten million dollars of negative cash-flow from the network. Note please the added thirty-five millions resulting from the issuance of the subordinated sinking debentures. It was clear the fat on the network had to be flitched off --

ANOTHER CLOSER ANGLE on the CHAIR in the first row that keeps swivelling back and forth.

HACKETT (Contd)
(on podium, as a new slide of charts flashes on screen)
Please note an increase in projected initial programming revenues in the amount of twenty-one million dollars due to the phenomenal success of the Howard Beale show. I expect a positive cash-flow for the entire complex of forty-five million achievable in this fiscal year, a year, in short, ahead of schedule --

ANOTHER ANGLE closer on the swivelling CHAIR but still not revealing its occupant.

HACKETT (Contd)
I go beyond that. This network may well be the most significant profit center of the communications complex --

FULL SHOT of HACKETT barely concealing his pride --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- and, based upon the projected rate of return on invested capital, and if merger is eventually accomplished, the communications complex may well become the towering and most profitable center in the entire CC and A empire. I await your questions and comments. Mr. Jensen?

CAMERA PANS ACROSS the huge dark room of tiered seats to the swivelling CHAIR in the front row which now swivels to face CAMERA, revealing a short, balding, bespectacled man with a Grant Woods face. This is ARTHUR JENSEN, the President and Chairman of the Board of CC and A.

JENSEN
(murmurs)
Very good, Frank. Exemplary. Keep it up --

TIGHT SHOT of HACKETT, basking in this praise, suffused with pride --

124. INT: TEMPLE EMANUEL - NEW YORK - TUESDAY, JANUARY 28 - 10:30 A.M. 124.

EDWARD GEORGE RUDDY lying in state.

ANOTHER ANGLE showing the vaulted reaches of the Temple packed with a standing room audience of condolers with the white yarmalka-ed RABBI in b.g. officating. All the NETWORK BRASS are spotted around the congregation.

CLOSER ANGLE ACROSS MAX among the condolers, following his eyes to several rows of pews down on the other side of the aisle where DIANA is sitting. Aware of MAX's eyes on her, she turns her face a bit so that their eyes meet briefly. She smiles, turns back to the RABBI's eulogy --

125. EXT: 65TH STREET - MAIN ENTRANCE - TEMPLE EMANUEL - DAY - SNOW 125.

SNOW drifting down. CROWD of overcoated condolers flooding the sidewalk. A cortege of black limousines lined up in front of the temple as FUNERAL DIRECTORS guide condolers into their respective limousines. A curious crowd of PASSERSBY watch. MAX SCHUMACHER threads his way through the CRUSH to where DIANA CHRISTENSON stands, murmuring to NELSON CHANEY and WALTER AMUNDSEN, all bundled up in winter coats. There are muttered "Hello, Max, how are you's" and "How's everything, Walter," etc.

MAX
(to DIANA)
Buy you a cup of coffee?

DIANA
Hell, yes.

Goodbyes all around, and MAX and DIANA move off through the fringe of the CRUSH on the sidewalk. CAMERA DOLLIES with them. They turn the corner onto --

126. EXT: FIFTH AVENUE - DAY - SNOW 126.

They head downtown. They walk silently. SNOW drifts down on them. CAMERA DOLLIES with them.

MAX
Do you have to get back to the office?

DIANA
Nothing that can't wait.

They walk on silently.

DIANA
(after a moment)
I drop down to the news studios every now and then and ask Howard
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
Beale about you. He says you're doing fine. Are you?

MAX
No.

DIANA
Are you keeping busy?

MAX
After a fashion. This is the third funeral I've been to in two weeks. I have two other friends in hospital whom I visit regularly. I've been to a couple of christenings. All my friends seem to be dying or having grandchildren.

DIANA
You should be a grandfather about now. You have a pregnant daughter in Seattle, don't you?

MAX
Any day now. My wife's out there for the occasion. I've thought many times of calling you.

DIANA
I wish you had.

They both suddenly stop on Fifth Avenue between 65th and 64th Streets and regard each other. An occasional snowflake moistens their cheeks, wets their hair.

DIANA
I bumped into Sybil the Soothsayer in the elevator last week. I said: "You know, Sybil, about four months ago, you predicted I would get involved with a middle-aged man, and, so far, all that's happened is one many-splendored night. I don't call that getting involved." And she said: "Don't worry. You will." It was a many-splendored night, wasn't it, Max?

MAX
Yes, it was.

DIANA
Are we going to get involved, Max?

MAX
Yes. I need to get involved very much. How about you?

DIANA
I've reached for the phone to call you a hundred times, but I was sure you hated me for my part in taking your news show away.

MAX
I probably did. I don't know any more. All I know is I can't keep you out of my mind.

They stare at each other, bemused by the abrupt fragile explosion of their feelings. The SNOW drifts down. PEDESTRIANS move back and forth around them. The Fifth Avenue TRAFFIC honks and grinds its way downtown.

DIANA
My God, she's uncanny.

MAX
Who?

DIANA
Sybil the Soothsayer. We've got a modern-day Greek drama here, Max. Two star-crossed lovers ordained to fall disastrously in love by the gods. A December-May story. Happily married middle-aged man meets desperately lonely young career woman, let's say a violinist. They both know their illicit love can only end in tragedy, but they are cursed by the gods and plunge dementedly in love. For a few brief moments, they are happy. He abandons devoted wife and loving children, and she throws away her concert career. Their friends plead with them to give each other up, but they are helpless playthings in the hands of malignant gods. Their love sours, embittered by ugly little jealousies, cryptic rancors. The soothsayer appears again and warns the girl she will die if she persists in this heedless love affair. She defies the soothsayer. But

(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
now one of the man's children is rushed to the hospital with a mysterious disease. He rushes back to his family, and she is left to throw herself on the railroad tracks. Give me a two-page outline on it, Max. I might be able to sell it to Xerox.

MAX
A bit too austere for teevee, I think.

DIANA
You're right. We wouldn't get an 11 rating. How about a twist on Brief Encounter? Happily married man meets woman married to her career.

MAX
NBC did Brief Encounter last year, and it sank.

DIANA
Well, we're both a bit long in the tooth to try for Romeo and Juliet.

MAX
Why don't we just wing it?

She laughs, then he. A PASSERBY darts them a curious glance.

127. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH 127.

MAX and his wife, LOUISE, in the middle of an ugly domestic scene. LOUISE sits erect on an overstuffed chair, her eyes wet with imminent tears; MAX strides around the room. He is clearly under great stress.

LOUISE
(shrilly)
How long has it been going on?

MAX
---(prowling around the room)
A month. I thought at first it might be a transient thing and blow over in a week. I still
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
hope to God it's just a menopausal infatuation. But it is an infatuation, Louise. There's no sense my saying I won't see her again because I will. Do you want me to clear out, go to a hotel?

LOUISE
Do you love her?

MAX
I don't know how I feel. I'm grateful I still feel anything. I know I'm obsessed with her.

LOUISE
(stands)
Then say it! Don't keep telling me you're obsessed, you're infatuated -- say you're in love with her!

MAX
I'm in love with her.

LOUISE
(erupts)
Then get out, go to a hotel, go anywhere you want, go live with her, but don't come back! Because after twenty-five years of building a home and raising a family and all the senseless pain we've inflicted on each other, I'll be damned if I'll just stand here and let you tell me you love somebody else!
(now it's she striding around, weeping, a caged lioness)
Because this isn't just some convention weekend with your secretary, is it? Or some broad you picked up after three belts of booze. This is your great winter romance, isn't it?, your last roar of passion before you sink into your emeritus years. Is that what's left for me? Is that my share? She gets the great winter passion, and I get the dotage? Am I supposed to sit at home knitting and purling till you slink back like a penitent drunk? I'm your wife, damn it! If you can't work up a
(MORE)

LOUISE (Contd)
winter passion for me, then the least I require is respect and allegiance! I'm hurt! Don't you understand that? I'm hurt badly!

She stares, her cheeks streaked with tears, at MAX standing at the terrace glass door, staring blindly out, his own eyes wet and welling. After a moment, he turns and regards his anguished wife.

LOUISE (Contd)
Say something, for God's sake.

MAX
I've got nothing to say.

He enfolds her; she sobs on his chest.

LOUISE
(after a moment)
Are you that deeply involved with her?

MAX
Yes.

LOUISE
I won't give you up easily, Max.

He struggles to restrain his tears. She releases herself from his embrace.

LOUISE (Contd)
I think the best thing is if you did move out. Does she love you, Max?

MAX
I'm not sure she's capable of any real feelings. She's the television generation. She learned life from Bugs Bunny. The only reality she knows is what comes over her teevee set. She has devised a variety of scenarios for us all to play, as if it were a Movie of the Week. And, my God!, look at us, Louise. Here we are going through the obligatory middle-of-Act-Two scorned wife throws peccant husband out scene. But, no fear, I'll come back home
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
in the end. All her plot outlines have me leaving her and returning to you because the audience won't buy a rejection of the happy American family. She does have one script in which I kill myself, an adapted for television version of Anna Karenina in which she's Count Vronsky and I'm Anna.

LOUISE
You're in for some dreadful grief, Max.

MAX
I know.

128. INT: UBS BUILDING - N.Y. - DIANA'S OFFICE, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1975 128.

DIANA, murmuring into her squawk box and, at the same time, putting last minute things into a weekend bag. She is ebullient --

DIANA
(on squawk box)
... I know what NBC offered them, Marty, so I'm saying go to three point five, and I want an option for a third run on all of them ... Marty, I'm in a big hurry, and you and Charlie are supposed to be negotiating this, so goodbye and good luck, and I'll see you Monday ...

Clicks off her squawk box, snaps her weekend bag shut, whisks her sheep wool-lined coat out of her closet and strides out into --

129. INT: DIANA'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE 129.

-- where there is no one sitting, and continues out into --

130. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM 130.

where a few SECRETARIES are still at their desks. TOMMY PELLEGRINO is just coming out of his office --

PELLEGRINO
(calls to DIANA)
Jimmy Caan's agent just called and says absolutely nix.

DIANA
(striding across the room)
You can't win them all.

PELLEGRINO
Where can I reach you later today?

DIANA
(exiting)
You can't. I'll be gone all weekend.

PELLEGRINO turns to BARBARA SCHLESINGER now poking her head out of her office --

PELLEGRINO
I think the Dragon Lady got herself a dragon fellow.

SCHLESINGER
Poor bastard.

131. EXT: UBS BUILDING - SIXTH AVENUE - AFTERNOON - DAY 131.

DIANA, now wearing her sheep wool-lined coat and carrying her weekend bag, comes striding happily out through the entrance doors, heads for 55th Street, spots a double-parked car, and heads heedless of traffic across the street to --

132. EXT: 55TH STREET - DAY 132.

MAX SCHUMACHER in a rented Chevy, leaning across to open the door for her. She slips into the front seat, slams the door shut, nestles her head on MAX's overcoated shoulder, as he starts the ignition --

DIANA
(happy and in love)
NBC's offering three point two and a half mil per for a package of five James Bond pictures, and I think I'm going to steal them for three point five with a third run --

They move out into the heavy traffic of Sixth Avenue --

133. EXT: DESERTED BEACH IN THE HAMPTONS - DUSK 133.

Traditional lyric love scene. The two mackinaw-ed lovers walking hand-in-hand on a lovely stretch of deserted winter beach. The tide is coming in --

DIANA
(bubbling)
The Vigilante show is sold firm. Ford took a complete position at, so help me, five-fifty CPM. In fact, I'm moving the Vigilante show to nine and I'm going to stick the Mao Tse Tung Hour in at eight because we're having a lot of trouble selling the Mao Tse Tung Hour. This way we give it a terrific lead-in from the Howard Beale Show and we'll back into the Vigilantes, and it certainly ought to carry its own time slot --

134. INT: A ROMANTIC LITTLE ITALIAN RESTAURANT 134.

The obligatory Italian restaurant, checkered tablecloth, candles, wine, etc. DIANA and MAX at dinner, utterly rapt in each other --

DIANA
(pouring out her heart)
That Mao Tse Tung Hour is turning into one big pain in the ass. We're having heavy legal problems with the federal government right now. Two FBI guys turned up in Hackett's office last week and served us with a subpoena. They heard about our Flagstaff bank ripoff film, and they want it. We're getting around that by doing the show in collaboration with the News Divison, so Hackett told the FBI to fuck off; we're standing on the First Amendment, freedom of the press, and the right to protect our sources --

135. EXT: MOTOR COURT - NIGHT 135.

DIANA and MAX getting out of their car and heading for one of the ground-level rooms, MAX unlocking the door --

DIANA
(chirping merrily along)
-- Walter thinks we can knock out the misprision of felony charge --

They go into --

136. INT: MOTOR COURT - THEIR ROOM 136.

MAX flicks the light on, kicks the door shut, and they are instantly into each other's arms in a passionate embrace.

DIANA
-- but he says absolutely nix on going to series. They'll hit us with inducement and conspiracy to commit a crime --

She busily removes her shoes and unbuttons her blouse and whisks out of her slacks; and, down to her bikini panties, she is now scouring the walls for a thermostat.

DIANA (Contd)
Christ, it's cold in here --
(she turns up the heat)
You see we're paying these nuts from the Ecumenical Liberation Army ten thousand bucks a week to bring in authentic film footage on their revolutionary activities, and that constitutes inducement to commit a crime; and Walter says we'll all wind up in federal prison --

Nubile and nearly naked, she entwines herself around MAX, who, by now, has stripped down to his trousers; and the two hungering bodies slide down onto the bed where they commence an affable moment of amative foreplay --

DIANA (Contd)
(efficiently unbuckling and unzippering MAX's trousers)
-- I said: "Walter, let the government sue us! We'll take them to the Supreme Court! We'll be front page for months! The Washington Post and the New York Times will be doing two editorials a week about us! We'll have more press than Watergate!"

Groping, grasping, gasping and fondling, they contrive to denude each other, and, in a fever of sexual hunger, DIANA mounts MAX, and the SCREEN is filled with the voluptuous writhings of love, DIANA crying out with increasing exultancy --

DIANA (Contd)
(in the throes of passion)
-- All I need -- is six weeks of federal litigation -- and the Mao Tse Tung Hour -- can start carrying its own time slot!

She screams in consummation, sighs a long, deliciously shuddering sigh, and sinks softly down into MAX's embrace. For a moment, she rests her head on MAX's chest, eyes closed in feline contentment.

DIANA (Contd)
(after a moment, she purrs)
What's really bugging me now is my daytime programming. NBC's got a lock on daytime with their lousy game shows, and I'd like to bust them. I'm thinking of doing a homosexual soap opera -- The Dykes -- the heart-rending saga of a woman helplessly in love with her husband's mistress. What do you think? --

NARRATION
The Mary Ann Gifford pilot movie went on the air March 14th --

137. EXT: A SMALL ISOLATED FARMHOUSE IN ENCINO - NIGHT 137.

A black LIMOUSINE winds its way up the dirt road to the front porch, where the car is halted and checked out by an armed guard (DOWLING) --

NARRATION
-- It received a 47 share in its first hour, climbing to a 51 during its second hour --

Slivers of lights slither out from behind the drawn shades of the farmhouse, and we can hear the sounds of ANGRY VOICES.

TWO AGENTS from ICM disgorge from the limousine -- a young man in his early 30's, FREDDIE, carrying a large manila envelope, and a fat young woman in her mid-30's, HELEN MIGGS, carrying an attache case --

NARRATION
-- showing sustained and increasing audience interest. The network promptly committed to fifteen shows --

MIGGS and FREDDIE go up the porch and into --

138. INT: THE FARMHOUSE - ENTRANCE FOYER 138.

This is the current headquarters of the Ecumenical Liberation Army, and it is no less a shambles than their previous one in Watts. Cartons, crates, newspapers, scraps of food, torn grocery bags, stacks of pamphlets, cases of weapons and ammunition, broken furniture and sleeping bags are littered every which way about. There seems to be some sort of conference going on in the living room, o.s. left --

NARRATION
-- with an option for ten more --

139. As the TWO ICM AGENTS head for the living room, 139. we can see LAUREEN HOBBS and the three William Morris agents, WALLIE, LENNIE and ED, perhaps remembered from earlier scenes. We can also see the GREAT AHMED KHAN, still wearing his shako, MARY ANN GIFFORD, still wearing her bandoliers of bullets, and OTHER MEMBERS of the Khan's group in fatigues and bearing arms. There is also a middle-aged LAWYER from ICM named WILLIE STEIN. Everybody -- with the exception of the GREAT KHAN's retinue -- is seated on broken chairs and cartons and crates --

NARRATION
-- There were, of course, the usual production difficulties --

Everybody in the living room conference is studying 80-page contracts from which one of the agents (WALLIE) is reading --

WALLIE
(mumbling along)
-- "herein called either 'the Production Fee' or 'overhead' equal to twenty percent two-oh (except such percentage shall be thirty percent three-oh for ninety minute or longer television programs -- "

140. INT: THE FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM 140.

STEIN
(a nervous man, to the new arrivals, now entering)
Where the he'l have you been?

MIGGS
(embracing the GREAT KHAN)
Ahmed, sweet, that dodo you sent for a driver couldn't find this fucking place.

There is a genial exchange of helloes and waves between the phalanxes of AGENTS --

STEIN
Let's get on with this before they raid this place, and we all wind up in the joint.

ED
(to FREDDIE now pulling up a crate)
We're on Schedule A, page seven, small c small i --

MIGGS
(whisking through her copy of the contract)
Have we settled that sub-licensing thing? We want a clear definition here. Gross proceeds should consist of all funds the sublicensee receives not merely the net amount remitted after payment to sublicensee or distributor.

STEIN
We're not sitting still for over-head charges as a cost prior to distribution.

LAUREEN
(whose nerves have worn thin, explodes:)
Don't fuck with my distribution costs! I'm getting a lousy two-fifteen per segment, and I'm already deficiting twenty-five grand a week with Metro. I'm paying William Morris ten percent off the top!
(indicates the GREAT KHAN)
-- And I'm giving this turkey ten thou a segment and another five for this fruitcake --
(meaning MARY ANN GIFFORD)
(MORE)

LAUREEN (Contd)
And, Helen, don't start no shit with me about a piece again! I'm paying Metro twenty percent of all foreign and Canadian distribution, and that's after recoupment! The Communist Party's not going to see a nickel out of this goddam show until we go into syndication!

MIGGS
Come on, Laureen, you've got the party in there for seventy-five hundred a week production expenses.

LAUREEN
I'm not giving this pseudo insurrectionary sectarian a piece of my show! I'm not giving him script approval! And I sure as shit ain't cutting him in on my distribution charges!

MARY ANN GIFFORD
(screaming in from the back)
Fugginfascist! Have you seen the movies we took at the San Marino jail break-out demonstrating the rising up of a seminal prisoner-class infrastructure!

LAUREEN
You can blow the seminal prisoner-class infrastructure out your ass! I'm not knocking down my goddam distribution charges!

The GREAT KHAN decides to offer an opinion by SHOOTING his PISTOL off into the air. This gives everybody something to consider, especially WILLIE STEIN who almost has a heart attack.

THE GREAT KHAN
Man, give her the fucking over-head clause.

STEIN
How did I get here? Who's going to believe this? I'm sitting here in a goddam farm in Encino at ten o'clock at night negotiating over-head charges with cowboys!

THE GREAT KHAN
(flipping through his copy)
Let's get to page twenty-two, five, small a, subsidiary rights.

Everybody starts flipping through their contracts.

LENNIE
Where are we now?

WALLIE
Page twenty-two, middle of the page, subsidiary rights --
(begins to read)
"As used herein, 'subsidiary rights' means, without limitation, any and all rights with respect to theatrical motion picture rights, radio broadcasting, legitimate stage performances, printed publications (including, but not limited to, hard-cover books, but excluding paperback books and comic books) and/or any other uses of a similar or dissimilar nature -- "

141. A HOTEL MARQUEE which reads: 141.

WELCOME UBS AFFILIATES CONVENTION

EXT: FRONT OF THE CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL - WEDNESDAY, MAY 28 - 6:00 P.M. - DAY

Across the marquee, looking down on the CRUSH of station managers, program executives and sales vice-presidents from the various affiliates, all tuxedoe-ed and evening-gowned and milling about. Spotted in the cheerful CRUSH can be seen DIANA, MR. AND MRS. AMUNDSEN, MR. AND MRS. ZANGWILL, jollying it up with the affiliates' executives. and their wives --

142. INT: GRAND BALLROOM - COCKTAIL AREA - CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL 142.

A huge BANNER reading UBS AFFILIATES 1975 hanging high over the ballroom.

PAN DOWN to show 1000 tuxedo-ed and evening-gowned PEOPLE, mostly middle-aged in the vast shuffle of cocktail time -- HUBBUB, intermingling flux and a slow general shuffling surge through the doors leading into --

143. INT: GRAND BALLROOM 143.

CLOSER ANGLE of the CRUSH of PEOPLE at the doors. HERBERT THACKERAY, (VP Stations Relations,) and NORMAN MOLDANIAN (VP Owned Stations,) with their WIVES and carrying their drinks and exchanging pleasantries with the GENERAL MANAGER of KGIM Cincinnati and his WIFE and the GENERAL MANAGER of WGGK Albuquerque and his WIFE as well as the SALES MANAGER of that station and his WIFE. High CHATTER and HUBBUB, lots of hearty chuckles and general Rotarian bonhomie. In b.g., FRANK HACKETT and his WIFE exchanging Rotarian bonhomie with some other GENERAL MANAGERS and PROGRAM DIRECTORS and SALES MANAGERS of various affiliates and their WIVES --

144. ANOTHER ANGLE as DIANA, evening-gowned, beautiful, glowing and effulgent, leans down from her place on the dais to accept congratulatory comments from the SALES MANAGER of WLET, Boise, and his WIFE standing on the floor level -- 144.

SALES MANAGER
(pumping DIANA's hand)
-- Millard Villanova, Sales Manager, WLET Boise -- my wife, here, Maureen --

DIANA
My pleasure --

SALES MANAGER
I just want to tell you we saw your great stuff this afternoon, Di -- it was great --

DIANA
Great, Millard --

She turns to accept some more enthusiastic greetings from another GENERAL MANAGER and his WIFE being brought down the dais to her by WALTER AMUNDSEN, (General Counsel Network) --

145. WIDE ANGLE SHOT of the whole ballroom, dark, everybody seated at their tables now, listening to an address by NELSON CHANEY (President UBS Network), a spotlighted figure at the podium -- 145.

CHANEY
-- Over the past two days, you've all had opportunity to meet Diana
(MORE)

CHANEY (Contd)
Christanson, our Vice President in charge of programming. This afternoon, you all saw some of the stuff she's set up for the new season --

CLOSER SHOT of CHANEY --

CHANEY (Contd)
You all know she's the woman behind the Howard Beale show. We know she's beautiful. We know she's brainy. I just think, before we start digging into our Chateaubriands, we ought to let her know how we feel about her --

An OVATION from the AUDIENCE. In response to CHANEY's beckoning, DIANA rises from her chair in the glistening shadows of the dais and comes down to the podium. She stands there -- showered with APPLAUSE, beaming, exultant --

DIANA
We've got the number one show in television!
(applause)
And, at next year's affiliates' meeting, I'll be standing here telling you we've got the top five!
(tumult)

ANOTHER ANGLE ACROSS HACKETT at the dais with DIANA in b.g. An ASSISTANT MANAGER leans across HACKETT and murmurs to him --

DIANA (Contd)
Last year, we were the number four network -- next year, we're number one!
(tumult)

HACKETT rises, murmurs apologies to his neighbors, follows the ASSISTANT MANAGER through the shadows of the dais and heads out --

DIANA (Contd)
It is exactly seven o'clock here in Los Angeles. And right now over a million homes using television in this city are turning their dials to Channel 3 -- and that's our channel!

MUSIC: A RATAPLAN OF KETTLEDRUMS AND A TARANTARA OF TRUMPETS.

146. INT: COCKTAIL AREA OF THE GRAND BALLROOM 146.

A portable TeeVee set perched on a bar --

ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
Ladies and gentlemen! -- let's hear it! -- how do you feel?! --

STUDIO AUDIENCE (ON TV)
(happily roaring out)
We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take this any more!

PULL BACK to show we are in the vast cocktail area of the Grand Ballroom, now being cleared away by a staff of WAITERS and BUSBOYS -- hors d'oeuvres, spreads and booze being carried away, table and chairs being packed off, linens being whisked and folded. A couple of WAITERS are watching the Howard Beale show on the portable TV set perched on the room's bar --

STUDIO ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
Ladies and gentlemen -- the mad prophet of the airways -- Howard Beale!

On the TV set, the houselights go down, the curtain rises, and, as before, bare stage, shimmering stained glass window, an ethereal shaft of light, and HOWARD BEALE in his austere black suit trudges out and explodes --

HOWARD (ON TV)
All right, listen to me! Listen carefully! This is your goddam life I'm talking about today! In this country, when one company takes over another company, they simply buy up a controlling share of the stock. But first they have to file notice with the government. That's how C.C. and A. -- the Communications Corporation of America -- bought up the company that owns this network. And now somebody's buying up C.C. and A! Some company named Western World Funding Corporation is buying up C.C. and A! They filed their notice this morning! Well, just who the hell is Western World Funding Corporation? It's a consortium of

(MORE)

HOWARD (Contd)
banks and insurance companies who are not buying C.C. and A. for themselves but as agents for somebody else!

147. LONG WIDE ANGLE SHOT with TV set in f.g. showing the spacious cocktail area being cleared away, as far across the room the doors to the Ballroom open and HACKETT follows the ASSISTANT MANAGER in. HACKETT lingers at the doors while the ASSISTANT MANAGER gets a WAITER to bring a jack phone to one of the tables still standing -- 147.

HOWARD (ON TV)
Well, who's this somebody else? They won't tell you! They won't tell you, they won't tell the Senate, they won't tell the SEC, the FCC, the Justice Department, they won't tell anybody! They say it's none of our business! The hell it ain't! --

REVERSE ACROSS HACKETT as a jack phone is brought to his table; the cluster around the TV set in b.g.

HACKETT
(on phone)
This is Mr. Hackett, do you have a New York call for me?
(calls to cluster around TV set)
Do you want to turn that down, please --

REVERSE ACROSS TV set with HACKETT in b.g.

HOWARD (ON TV)
(volume a bit down)
Well, I'll tell you who they're buying C.C. and A. for. They're buying it for the Saudi-Arabian Investment Corporation! They're buying it for the Arabs!

REVERSE ON HACKETT.

HACKETT
(on phone, the hearty executive)
Clarence? Frank Hackett here! How's everything back in New York? How's the good lady? --
(MORE)

HACKETT (Contd)
(his face sobers)
-- All right, take it easy, Clarence, I don't know what you're talking about ... When? ... Clarence, take it easy. The Howard Beale show's just going on out here. You guys get it three hours earlier in New York ... Clarence, take it easy. How the hell could I see it? It's just on now -- Well, when did Mr. Jensen call you? --

REVERSE ACROSS TV set. In b.g., HACKETT has hung up and is slowly walking toward the group around the TV set --

HOWARD (ON TV)
-- We know the Arabs have ten billion dollars invested in this country! They own radio stations and the Ladies Home Journal and big chunks of Exxon and Texaco and Mobil Oil! We know they're into Lockheed and PanAm, hotel chains and housing complexes in Atlanta! That's what we know! --

HACKETT peers over the shoulder of a WAITER to watch the television show --

HOWARD (ON TV)
What we don't know is this C.C. and A. deal and all the other C.C. and A. deals! --
(HACKETT winces)
Right now, the Arabs have screwed us out of enough American dollars to come back and, with our own money, buy General Motors, IBM, ITT, A T and T, Dupont, U.S. Steel, and twenty other top American companies. Hell, they already own half of England.

148. INT: A VIDEO TAPE ROOM - UBS BUILDING - LOS ANGELES 148.

HACKETT, NELSON CHANEY and WALTER AMUNDSEN, all tuxedo-ed, and DIANA, evening-gowned, sit and stand in the dark smallish room, cluttered with electronic equipment, watching a replay of the Howard Beale show on the big screen. TWO TECHNICIANS fiddle with their equipment --

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
Now, listen to me, goddammit! The Arabs are simply buying us! They're buying all our land, our whole economy, the press, the factories, financial institutions, the government! They're going to own us! A handful of agas, shahs and emirs who despise this country and everything it stands for -- democracy, freedom, the right for me to get up on television and tell you about it -- a couple of dozen medieval fanatics are going to own where you work, where you live, what you read, what you see, your cars, your bowling alleys, your mortgages, your schools, your churches, your libraries, your kids, your whole life! --

AMUNDSEN
(mutters)
The son of a bitch is effective all right --

HACKETT, who's seen all this already, isn't even watching. He is sprawled in his chair, eyes closed, numbed, even serene with despair.

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
-- And there's not a single law on the books to stop them! There's only one thing that can stop them -- you! So I want you to get up now. I want you to get out of your chairs and go to the phone. Right now. I want you to go to your phone or get in your car and drive into the Western Union office in town. I want everybody listening to me to get up right now and send a telegram to the White House --

HACKETT
(sighs in soft anguish)
Oh, God --

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
By midnight tonight I want a million telegrams in the White House! I want them wading knee-deep in telegrams at the White House! Get up!
(MORE)

HOWARD (ON SCREEN) (Contd)
Right now! And send President Ford a telegram saying: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more! I don't want the banks selling my country to the Arabs! I want this C.C. and A. deal stopped now! -- "

HACKETT
Oh, God --

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
I want this C.C. and A. deal stopped now! I want this C.C. and A. deal stopped now!

At which point, HOWARD keels over in his now familiar prophetic swoon. On SCREEN, ATTENDANTS come and carry HOWARD off --

CHANEY
(to a TECHNICIAN)
Is that it? Does he come back later in the show?

TECHNICIAN
That's it. This is one of those shows he just zonks out.

CHANEY
(to HACKETT)
Do you want to see any more, Frank?
(HACKETT sits in numb silence)
All right, turn it off --

The other TECHNICIAN pushes a button and the SCREEN goes white. The first TECHNICIAN flicks the room lights on.

AMUNDSEN
(to HACKETT)
Do you want to go to your office?

HACKETT stares silently into space.

CHANEY
(to the TECHNICIANS)
Look, could we have the room?

TECHNICIAN
Sure.

149. The two TECHNICIANS exit. SILENCE fills the cluttered room. AMUNDSEN and HACKETT sit in their chairs, CHANEY leans against a side wall, DIANA lounges against a rear wall. After a moment, AMUNDSEN stretches, stands -- 149.

AMUNDSEN
Well, I'd like to see a type-script and run it a couple of more times, but I don't think he said anything seriously actionable. But, as for this whole C.C. and A. deal with the Saudis, you'd know a lot more about that than I would, Frank, is it true?

HACKETT sighs.

HACKETT
(mumbles)
Yes. C.C. and A. has two billions in loans with the Saudis, and they hold every pledge we've got. We need that Saudi money bad.
(he stands, so wretched he is tranquil)
A disaster. This show is a disaster, an unmitigated disaster, the death knell. I'm ruined, I'm dead, I'm finished.

CHANEY
Maybe we're overstating Beale's clout with the public.

HACKETT
An hour ago, Clarence McElheny called me from New York. It was ten o'clock in the East, and our people in the White House report they were already knee-deep in telegrams. By tomorrow morning, they'll be suffocating in telegrams.

CHANEY
Well, can the government stop the deal?

HACKETT
They can hold it up. The SEC could hold this deal up for twenty years if they wanted to. I'm finished.
(MORE)

HACKETT (Contd)
Any second that phone's going to ring and Clarence McElheny's going to tell me Mr. Jensen wants me in his office tomorrow morning so he can personally chop my head off.
(tears stream shamelessly down his cheeks as he shuffles, a broken man, around the room)
Four hours ago, I was the Sun God at C.C. and A., Mr. Jensen's hand-picked golden boy, the heir apparent. Now I'm a man without a corporation!

DIANA
(comes off the back wall)
Let's get back to Howard Beale. You're not seriously going to pull Beale off the air.

HACKETT
Mr. Jensen is unhappy with Howard Beale and wants him discontinued.

DIANA
He may be unhappy, but he isn't stupid enough to withdraw the number one show on television out of pique.

HACKETT
(explodes)
Two billion dollars isn't pique! That's the wrath of God! And the wrath of God wants Howard Beale fired!

DIANA
What for? Every other network will grab him the minute he walks out the door. He'll be back on the air for ABC tomorrow. And we'll lose twenty points in audience share in the first week, roughly a forty million loss in revenues for the year.

HACKETT
I'm going to kill Howard Beale! I'm going to impale the son of a bitch with a sharp stick through the heart!

DIANA
And let's not discount federal action by the Justice Department. If C.C. and A. pulls Beale off the air as an act of retribution, that's a flagrant violation of network autonomy and an egregious breach of the consent decree.

HACKETT
(beginning to like his new train of thought)
I'll take out a contract on him. I'll hire professional killers. I'll do it myself. I'll strangle him with a sashcord.

DIANA
No, I don't think Jensen is going to fire anybody. He's sitting up there in his office surrounded by lawyers and senior vice presidents, and right about now, they've begun to realize the extraordinary impact of television. That impact can be focussed, manipulated, utilized. If Howard Beale can hurt them, he can help them.

The PHONE RINGS. A moment of anxious silence. HACKETT picks it up --

HACKETT
(on phone)
Hackett -- Yes, Clarence, I've already booked my flight ... Well, can you give me a little more time than that? I've got the red-eye flight, I won't be back in New York till six tomorrow morning ... That'll be just fine. I'll see you then --

He returns the phone to its cradle, regards DIANA for a moment.

HACKETT (Contd)
Mr. Jensen wants to meet Howard Beale personally. He wants Mr. Beale in his office at ten o'clock tomorrow morning --

150. EXT: THE C.C. AND A. BUILDING - PARK AVE. AND 46TH STREET - MORNING 150.

A black limousine pulls to the curb in front of the

C.C. and A. Building, disgorging HACKETT, and, a moment later, HOWARD BEALE, both dressed in banker's gray. As they move for the building's entrance, HACKETT herding HOWARD along, it becomes clear that HOWARD is in a beatified state. His eyes glisten transcendentally, and he smiles the smile of the elevated spirit. He suddenly pulls up abruptly, raises his arms over his head, and announces at the top of his lungs:

HOWARD
(imbued)
The final revelation is at hand! I have seen the shattering fulgurations of ultimate clarity! The light is impending! I bear witness to the light!

This outburst doesn't seem to bother most of the PEOPLE passing by except for ONE or TWO who murmur: "Hey, that's Howard Beale, isn't it?" The outburst does appall FRANK HACKETT, who stares in distress and entreaty to some god in the heavens, and clutches at HOWARD's arm to get him moving again.

151. INT: ARTHUR JENSEN'S OFFICE 151.

An enormous office with two walls of windows towering over the Manhattan landscape and through which SUNLIGHT streams in.. ARTHUR JENSEN is rising from behind his massive desk --

JENSEN
Good afternoon, Mr. Beale. They tell me you're a madman.

CAMERA DOLLIES to include HOWARD just coming into the room.

HOWARD
(closing the door behind himself)
Only desultorily.

JENSEN
How are you now?

HOWARD
(as mad as a hatter)
I'm as mad as a hatter.

JENSEN
Who isn't? Don't sit down.
(MORE)

JENSEN (Contd)
I'm taking you to our conference room which seems more seemly a setting for what I have to say to you.

He takes HOWARD's arm and moves him to a large oaken door leading out of JENSEN's office --

JENSEN (Contd)
I started as a salesman, Mr. Beale. I sold sewing machines and automobile parts, hair brushes and electronic equipment. They say I can sell anything. I'd like to try and sell something to you --

They pass into --

152. INT: THE CONFERENCE ROOM - C.C. AND A. BUILDING 152.

The overwhelming cathedral of a conference room remembered perhaps from an earlier scene where Frank Hackett gave his annual report. When last seen, it was in pitch darkness, but now the enormous curtains are up, and an almost celestial light pours in through the huge windows. Being on the 43rd and 44th floors, the sky outside is only sporadically interrupted by the towers of other skyscrapers. The double semi-circular bank of seats are all empty, and the general effect is one of hushed vastness --

JENSEN
Valhalla, Mr. Beale, please sit down --

He leads HOWARD down the steps to the floor level, himself ascends again to the small stage and the podium. HOWARD sits in one of the 200 odd seats. JENSEN pushes a button, and the enormous drapes slowly fall, slicing away layers of light until the vast room is utterly dark. Then, the little pinspots at each of the desks, including the one behind which HOWARD is seated, pop on, creating a miniature Milky Way effect. A shaft of white LIGHT shoots out from the rear of the room, spotting JENSEN on the podium, a sun of its own little galaxy. Behind him, the shadowed white of the lecture screen. JENSEN suddenly wheels to his audience of one and roars out:

JENSEN
You have meddled with the primal forces of nature, Mr. Beale, and
(MORE)

JENSEN (Contd)
I won't have it, is that clear?! You think you have merely stopped a business deal -- that is not the case! The Arabs have taken fifty billion dollars out of this country, and now they must put it back. It is ebb and flow, tidal gravity, it is ecological balance! You are an old man who thinks in terms of nations and peoples. There are no nations! There are no peoples! There are no Russians. There are no Arabs! There are no third worlds! There is no West! There is only one holistic system of systems, one vast and immane, interwoven, interacting, multi-variate, multi-national dominion of dollars! Petro-dollars, electro-dollars, multi-dollars!, Reichmarks, rubles, rin, pounds and shekels! It is the international system of currency that determines the totality of life on this planet! That is the natural order of things today! That is the atomic, subatomic and galactic structure of things today! And you have meddled with the primal forces of nature, and you will atone! Am I getting through to you, Mr. Beale?

HOWARD
(from the darkness)
Amen.

JENSEN
You get up on your little twenty-one inch screen, Mr. Beale, and howl about America and democracy. There is no America. There is no democracy. There is only IBM and ITT and A T and T and Dupont, Dow, Union Carbide and Exxon. What do you think the Russians talk about in their councils of state -- Karl Marx? They pull out their linear programming charts, statistical decision theories and minimax solutions like the good little systems-analysts they are and compute the

(MORE)

JENSEN (Contd)
price-cost probabilities of their transactions and investments just like we do. The Moslem masses may be medieval, but every moment of their lives is determined -- not by some savage desert god called Allah -- but by the primordial pull of profit and the primeval push of power. We no longer live in a world of nations and ideologies, Mr. Beale. The world is a college of corporations, inexorably determined by the immutable by-laws of business. The world is a business, Mr. Beale! It has been that way since man crawled out of the slime, and our children, Mr. Beale, will live to see that perfect world without war and famine, oppression and brutality -- one vast and ecumenical holding company, for whom all men will work to serve a common profit, in which all men will hold a share of stock, all necessities provided, all anxieties tranquilized, all boredom amused. And I have chosen you to preach this evangel, Mr. Beale.

HOWARD
(humble whisper)
Why me?

JENSEN
Because you're on television, dummy. Sixty million people watch you every night of the week, Monday through Friday.

HOWARD slowly rises from the blackness of his seat so that he is lit only by the ethereal diffusion of light shooting out from the rear of the room. He stares at JENSEN spotted on the podium, transfixed.

HOWARD
I have seen the face of God!

In b.g., up on the podium, JENSEN considers this curious statement for a moment.

JENSEN
You just might be right, Mr. Beale.

NARRATION
That evening, Howard Beale went on the air to preach the corporate cosmology of Arthur Jensen.

153. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM 153.

The CREW at their various control panels. Business as usual. If anything, EVERYBODY in the control room appears a little more bored. On the SHOW MONITOR, HOWARD BEALE stands in his stained-glass-filtered spotlight, but, rather than his old enraged self, he seems sad, resigned, weary --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
(sad, resigned, weary)
Last night, I got up here and asked you people to stand up and fight for your heritage, and you did and it was beautiful. Six million telegrams were received at the White House. The Arab takeover of C.C. and A. has been stopped. The people spoke, the people won. It was a radiant eruption of democracy. But I think that was it, fellers. That sort of thing isn't likely to happen again. Because, in the bottom of all our terrified souls, we all know that democracy is a dying giant, a sick, sick dying, decaying political concept, writhing in its final pain. I don't mean the United States is finished as a world power. The United States is the most powerful, the richest, the most advanced country in the world, light-years ahead of any other country. And I don't mean the Communists are going to take over the world. The Communists are deader than we are. What's finished is the idea that this great country is dedicated to the freedom and flourishing of every individual in it. It's the individual that's finished. It's the single, solitary human being who's finished. It's every single one of you out there who's finished. Because this is no longer a nation of independent individuals. This is a nation of
(MORE)

HOWARD (ON MONITOR) (Contd)
two hundred odd million transistorized, deodorized, whiter-than-white, steel-belted bodies, totally unnecessary as human beings and as replaceable as piston rods --

NARRATION
It was a perfectly admissable argument that Howard Beale advanced in the days that followed; it was, however, also a very tedious and depressing one. By the end of the first week in June --

154. INT: FIFTH FLOOR - CORRIDOR - TUESDAY, JUNE 10 - 3:30 P.M. 154.

DIANA, carrying a small booklet, striding down the corridor.

NARRATION
-- the Howard Beale show had dropped one point in the ratings, and its trend of shares dipped under forty-eight for the first time since last November --

DIANA turns into --

155. INT: THE NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM - ROOM 517 155.

-- quietly busy. Typewriters, telephones. DIANA heads straight for HOWARD's office --

NARRATION
Hysteria swept through the network --

DIANA wrenches the door to HOWARD's office open and strides into --

156. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE 156.

-- as DIANA strides in, interrupting an urgent colloquy between HOWARD at his desk and his agent, an urbane gentleman in his late 60's, LEW WEISKOPF --

DIANA
(drops the booklet she's carrying on HOWARD's desk)
In case you haven't seen this week's rating book, your share is down another point.
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
(to WEISKOPF)
I asked you to be here, Lew, because you're his goddam agent, and I'm counting on you to talk some sense into this lunatic. I'm sick of arguing with your client, Lew.

LEW
Patience, sweetheart, patience --

DIANA
Patience, my ass. We're starting to get rumbles from the advertisers. McCann-Ericson called Joe Donnelly this morning, and, when the agencies start calling the Head of Sales directly, that means in a week or two, we're going to start hearing about sponsors bailing out. He's got to stop this corporate universe kick --

HOWARD
(agitated)
I only say what my voices tell me to say.

DIANA
(erupting)
Well, fire them! We'll get you new voices! We'll call the Writers Guild and get you all the goddam voices you want! Lew here represents a thousand voices. We'll get you the best voices in the business! We want you to go back to being crazy, Howard!

HOWARD
(stands, cries out)
I'm not an actor! I can't get up and perform mad scenes for you! I am impelled by an inner force! I do what I am told to do! I say what I am told to say! I have no control over it!

DIANA throws up her hands in frustration --

157. INT: DIANA'S BEDROOM - THURSDAY, JUNE 19 - 7:15 P.M. 157.

-- as MAX lets himself into the apartment. MAX seems

depressed. HOWARD'S VOICE emanates from the o.s. bedroom --

HOWARD (ON TV O.S.)
-- Well, the time has come to say: is dehumanization such a bad word? Because good or bad, that's what's so. The whole world is becoming humanoid, creatures that look human but aren't. The whole world, not just us. We're just the most advanced country, so we're getting there first. The whole world's people are becoming mass-produced, programmed, wired, insensate things useful only to produce and consume other mass-produced things, all of them as unnecessary and useless as we are --

MAX has crossed the living room, looks into --

158. INT: THE BEDROOM 158.

-- where DIANA is perched on her bed, murmuring into the phone --

DIANA
(on phone)
Yeah .., Yeah ...

HOWARD (ON TV)
-- that's the simple truth you have to grasp, that human existence is an utterly futile and purposeless thing. Because once you've grasped that, then the whole universe becomes orderly and comprehensible --

DIANA looks up to drop a surly glance on MAX in the doorway, and returns to muttering into the phone. They are both clearly in foul tempers --

HOWARD (ON TV)
-- We are right now living in what has to be called a corporate society, a corporate world, a corporate universe. This world quite simply is a vast cosmology of small corporations orbitting around larger corporations who, in turn, revolve around giant corporations --

MAX
(overlapping)
I'm sorry I'm late. I spent the afternoon with my daughter --

DIANA, murmuring into the phone, doesn't even seem to have heard him. MAX turns away --

HOWARD (ON TV)
-- and this whole, endless, ultimate cosmology is expressly designed for the production and consumption of useless things --

DIANA clicks the remote control thing on her bed, and the TV set goes black.

DIANA
(on phone)
Sooner or later, we'll have to pull him off the air, Barbara, so let's start looking around for replacements. I hear ABC's grooming a mad prophet of their own in Chicago as our competition for next season. See if you can get a tape on him. Maybe, we can steal him. And let's start building up the other segments on the show, Sybil the Soothsayer, Jim Webbing. The Vox Populi segment is catching on; let's make that a daily feature --

159. INT: THE LIVING ROOM 159.

MAX sprawled morosely on one of the soft chairs. We notice that in the back of the living room, a bridge table has been set up as a makeshift desk. It has a typewriter on it and a welter of papers and books and filing folders. DIANA appears in the bedroom doorway, regards MAX coldly --

DIANA
(icily)
Every time you see somebody in your family, you come back in one of these morbid middle-aged moods. I'm tired of your goddamned morbid, middle-aged moods, Max.

MAX
(exploding from the chair)
And I'm tired of finding you on the goddamned phone every time
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
I turn around! I'm tired of being an accessory in your life! I'm tired of this hysteria about Howard Beale!

Storming about the room in his sudden volcanic rage, MAX finds himself by the upstage typewriter, which he sweeps crashing off the bridge table, sending the welter of papers there flying off in a storm --

MAX (Contd)
-- and I'm tired of pretending to write this dumb book about my maverick days in those great early years of television! Every executive fired from a network in the last twenty years has written this dumb book about the great early days of television! Nobody wants another dumb book about the great goddamned early days of television!

DIANA
Terrific, Max, terrific. Maybe you can start a whole new career as an actor.

For a moment, it looks as if MAX is going to slug her. Then he deflates --

MAX
It's the truth. After six months of living with you, I'm turning into one of your scripts. But this isn't a script, Diana. There's some real actual life going on here. I went to visit my wife today because she's in a state of depression, so depressed my daughter flew in from Seattle to be with her. And I feel lousy about that. I feel lousy about the pain I've caused my wife and kids. I feel guilty and conscience-stricken and all those things you think sentimental but which my generation called simple human decency. And I miss my home because I'm beginning to get scared shitless. It's all suddenly closer to the end than to the beginning, and death is suddenly a perceptible thing to me, with definable features. You've got a man going through primal

(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
doubts, Diana, and you've got to cope with it. Because I'm not some guy discussing male menopause on the Barbara Waltons show. I'm the man you presumably love. I live right here. I'm part of your life. I'm real. You can't switch to another channel.

DIANA
Well, what exactly is it you want me to do?

MAX
I just want you to love me, Diana. I just want you to love me, primal doubts and all. You understand that, don't you?

For one brief moment, you could almost believe she does understand. She stares, eyes-locked with MAX, her eyes threatening to well with tears. There are certainly tears in MAX's eyes.

DIANA
(small voice)
I don't know how to do that.

Then, shatteringly, the PHONE o.s. in the bedroom RINGS; and DIANA promptly turns to answer it --

DIANA
(matter-of-factly as she exits into the bedroom)
I'll be with you in a minute, Max --

He sighs, the inchoate moment of love evanesced --

NARRATION
By the first week in July, the Howard Beale show was down eleven points, and the panic had spread to even those people who had only a contractual connection to the network --

20. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE - MONDAY, JULY 7 - 2:30 P.M. 160.

LAUREEN HOBBS in a shrill, wide-eyed panic, raging all over DIANA's office as DIANA's phone RINGS, and DIANA answers it --

LAUREEN
(in a raging panic)
-- He's a plague! He's smallpox! He's typhoid! I don't want to follow his goddam show! I want out of that eight o'clock spot! I got enough troubles without Howard Beale for a lead-in. You guys have scheduled me up against Tony Orlando and Dawn! NBC's got Little House on the Prairie! ABC's got that new Mel Brooks show! You got to help me out! You got to do something about Howard Beale! Get rid of the plague! Get him off the air! Do something! Do anything!

DIANA
(hanging up and yelling back)
We're trying to find a replacement for him! I'm going down to look at audition tapes right now!

She is already out of her office --

161. INT: NINTH FLOOR - A SCREENING ROOM 161.

C.U. of an imposing MOSAIC FIGURE, fully bearded and wearing ankle-length black robes and thonged sandals, standing on a lonely mountain spur inveighing against the idolatries of the world. PULL BACK to show the screening room half-filled with network and programming executives, spotted around the room. DIANA is there - and her top assistants -- BARBARA SCHLESINGER and TOMMY PELLEGRINO. FRANK HACKETT is there; NELSON CHANEY, HERB THACKERAY (Stations Relations); and JOE DONNELLY and HARRY HUNTER. In b.g., the ranting MOSAIC FIGURE on the wall console roars out his inveighing until otherwise indicated --

DIANA
(suddenly standing into the shaft of light coming from the projector)
No, damn it! If we wanted hell-fire, we'd get Billy Graham! We don't want faith-healers, tentshow evangelists or Oberammargau passion-players! What about that terrific new messiah ABC was supposed to have signed up as our competition?

PELLEGRINO
(indicating the monitor screen)
That's him.

DIANA
That's him?

PELLEGRINO
Yeah.

DIANA
Jesus, turn him off.

The MONITOR SCREEN goes blank.

PELLEGRINO
I've got three more, but you've already seen the best ones. I've got a guru from Spokane and two more hellfires who see visions of the Virgin Mary.

DIANA sinks down in a chair and turns to HACKETT in the row immediately behind.

DIANA
We're not going to find a replacement for Howard Beale, so let's stop kidding ourselves. Fully fledged messiahs don't come in bunches. We either go with Howard or we go without him. My reports say we'll do better without him. It would be disaster to let this situation go on even another week. By then, he'll be down sixteen points and the trend irreversible, if it isn't already. I think we should fire Howard.

HACKETT
Arthur Jensen has taken a strong personal interest in the Howard Beale show.
(sighs gloomily, addresses the room at large)
I'm having dinner with him tonight. Let me talk to Jensen and then let's meet in my office at ten o'clock tonight. Diana, give me copies of all your audience research
(MORE)

HACKETT (Contd)
reports. I may need them for Jensen. Is ten o'clock convenient for everyone?

Apparently it is.

162. INT: LANDING OUTSIDE DIANA'S APARTMENT - 8:00 P.M. 162.

DIANA letting herself into her apartment.

163. INT: DIANA'S APARTMENT - FOYER 163.

Dark, shadowed. She moves down to --

164. INT: LIVING ROOM 164.

MAX has fallen asleep in one of the soft chairs. The newspaper he was reading has fallen to his lap. His mouth is a bit agape and he wheezes a little. In the stark lighting of the lamp behind the chair, he seems suddenly an old man. DIANA stands and regards him with perceptible distaste. She slips out of her jacket, crosses to the bedroom.

165. INT: BEDROOM 165.

All the lights are on. DIANA, freshly scrubbed and in a shower robe, is packing MAX's things. A large valise lies opened on the bed, and DIANA is fetching MAX's suits from the closet, folding them and packing them away. MAX appears rumpled and in his shirt-sleeves in the doorway behind her. She senses him there, glances at him, continues with her packing.

DIANA
I think the time has come, Max, to re-evaluate our relationship.

MAX
So I see.

DIANA
I don't like the way this script of ours is turning out. This whole thing started out as a comedy, remember? Now, it's turning into a seedy little drama. Middle-aged man leaves wife and family for young heartless woman, goes to pot. The Blue Angel with Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings. I don't like it.

MAX
So you've decided to cancel the show.

DIANA
Right.

MAX
Listen, I'll do that.

He moves to the bed to take over the packing. She sits in one of the bedroom chairs.

DIANA
The simple fact is you're a family man, Max. You like a home and kids, and that's beautiful. But I'm incapable of any such commitment. All you'll get from me is another couple of months of intermittent sex and recriminate and ugly little scenes like the one we had last night. I'm sorry for all those vicious things I said to you last night. You're not the worst fuck I've ever had. Believe me, I've had worse. And you don't puff and snorkle and make death-like rattles. As a matter of fact, you're rather serene in the sack.

MAX, who had gone into the bathroom for his toilet articles, comes out with them, stands, regards DIANA.

MAX
Why do women always think the most savage thing they can say to a man is to impugn his cocksmanship?

DIANA
I'm sorry I impugned your cocksmanship.

MAX
I stopped comparing genitals back in the schoolyard.

DIANA
You're being docile as hell about this.

MAX
Hell, Diana, I knew it was over between us weeks ago.

DIANA
Will you go back to your wife?

MAX
I'll try, but I don't think she'll jump at it. But don't worry about me. I'll manage. I always have, always will. I'm more concerned about you. Once I go, you'll be back in the eye of your own desolate terrors. Fifty dollar studs and the nightly sleepless contemplation of suicide. You're not the boozer type, so I figure a year, maybe two before you crack up or jump out your fourteenth floor office window.

DIANA
(stands)
Stop selling, Max. I don't need you.

She exits out into --

166. INT: THE LIVING ROOM 166.

-- and across that to the --

167. INT: THE KITCHEN 167.

-- where a kettle is steaming. She fetches a cup and saucer from the cupboard and would make some instant coffee but she is overtaken by a curious little spasm. Her hand holding the cup and saucer is shaking so much she has to put them down. With visible effort, she pulls herself together. She moves out of the kitchen to the --

168. INT: THE LIVING ROOM 168.

-- where she stands in the middle of the room and shouts at MAX through the opened bedroom doorway.

DIANA
(cries out)
I don't want your pain! I don't want your menopausal decay and death! I don't need you, Max.

MAX
You need me badly! I'm your last contact with human reality!
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
I love you, and that painful, decaying menopausal love is the only thing between you and the shrieking nothingness you live the rest of the day!

He slams the valise shut.

DIANA
Then don't leave me!

MAX
It's too late, Diana! There's nothing left in you that I can live with! You're one of Howard's humanoids, and, if I stay with you, I'll be destroyed. Like Howard Beale was destroyed! Like Laureen Hobbs was destroyed! Like everything you and the whole institution of television touch gets destroyed! You are television incarnate, Diana, indifferent to suffering, insensitive to joy. All of life is reduced to the common rubble of banality. War, murder, death are all the same to you as bottles of beer. The daily business of life is a corrupt comedy. You even shatter the sensations of time and space into jagged fragments of minutes, split-seconds and instant replays. You are madness, Diana, virulent madness, and whatever you touch dies with you. Well, not me! Not while I can still feel pleasure and pain and love! Oh, hell, Diana, it's over with us. I'm not sure it ever really happened, but I know it's over.

He turns back to his valise and buckles it. DIANA finds a chair, sits in it. A moment later, MAX comes out of the bedroom, lugging a raincoat as well as the valise. He lugs his way across the living room, then pauses for a moment, reflects --

MAX (Contd)
It's a happy ending, Diana. Wayward husband comes to his senses, returns to his wife with whom he has built a long and sustaining love.
(MORE)

MAX (Contd)
Heartless young woman left alone in her arctic desolation. Music up with a swell. Final commercial. And here are a few scenes from next week's show.

He disappears down the foyer. We can hear the CLICK of the front door being opened and the CLACK of the door closing. DIANA sits in her chair, pulling the shower robe around her, alone in her arctic desolation.

169. INT: 20TH FLOOR - UBS BUILDING - LOBBY, LOUNGE, CORRIDOR - 10:15 P.M. 169.

A solemn FRANK HACKETT in blue suit walks down the long, empty, hushed corridor to the large double doors of his office (which had originally been EDWARD RUDDY's office). At the doors, NELSON CHANEY is waiting for him.

CHANEY
How'd it go?

HACKETT sighs, enters --

170. INT: SECRETARY'S OFFICE 170.

-- where HERB THACKERAY and JOE DONNELLY are lounging. Everybody follows HACKETT into --

171. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE (ONCE RUDDY'S OFFICE) 171.

Nighttime outside, the crepuscular grandeur of Manhattan glittering below us. Waiting in the office, seated here and there, are WALTER AMUNDSEN and DIANA. HACKETT sits behind his desk. The others all find places around the room.

HACKETT
Mr. Jensen was unhappy at the idea of taking Howard Beale off the air. Mr. Jensen thinks Howard Beale is bringing a very important message to the American people, so he wants Howard Beale on the air. And he wants him kept on.

Nobody has anything to say to this.

HACKETT (Contd)
Mr. Jensen feels we are being too catastrophic in our thinking. I argued that television was a volatile industry in which success and failure were determined week by
(MORE)

HACKETT (Contd)
week. Mr. Jensen said he did not like volatile industries and suggested with a certain sinister silkiness that volatility in business usually reflected bad management. He didn't really care if Howard Beale was the number one show in television or the fiftieth. He didn't really care if the Beale Show lost money. The network should be stabilized so that it can carry a losing show and still maintain an overall profit. Mr. Jensen has an important message he wants conveyed to the American people, and Howard Beale is conveying it. He wants Howard Beale on the air, and he wants him kept on. I would describe his position on this as inflexible. Where does that put us, Diana?

DIANA
(taking papers out of her attache case)
That puts us in the shithouse, that's where that puts us.
(holds up her sheaf of papers)
Do you want me to go through this?

HACKETT
Yes.

DIANA
I have an advance TVQ report here. The Beale show Q score, which was forty-seven in the May book, is down to thirty-three and falling. Most of this loss occurred in the child and teen and eighteen-thirty-four categories, which were our core markets. NBC Nightly News, by contrast, has gone up to a twenty-nine Q, and, at this rate, will pass us by the end of July. Everybody here knows the Neilsen and share-trend scores. Let me just capsulate our own AR demographic reports which have been extensive. It is the AR department's carefully considered judgment -- and mine -- that if we get rid of Beale, we
(MORE)

DIANA (Contd)
should be able to maintain a very respectable share in the high twenties, possibly thirty, with a comparable Q level. The other segments on the Beale show -- Sybil the Scothsayer, Jim Webbing, the Vox Populi -- have all developed their own audiences. Our AR reports show without exception that it is Howard Beale that's the destructive force here. Minimally, we are talking about a ten point differential in shares. I think Joe ought to spell it out for us. Joe?

DONNELLY
A twenty-eight share is eighty-thousand dollar minutes, and I think we could sell complete positions on the whole. As a matter of fact, we're just getting into the pre-Christmas gift-sellers, and I'll tell you the agencies are coming back to me with four dollar CPMs. If that's any indication, we're talking forty, forty-five million dollar loss in annual revenues.

THACKERAY
You guys want to hear all the flak I'm getting from the affiliates?

HACKETT
We know all about it, Herb.

AMUNDSEN
And you would describe Mr. Jensen's position on Beale as inflexible?

HACKETT
Intractable and adamantine.

CHANEY
So what're we going to do about this Beale son of a bitch?

A sad silence settles over the top management of UBS-TV as they lounge about the enormous room.

HACKETT
(sighs)
I suppose we'll have to kill him.

Another long contemplative silence.

HACKETT (Contd)
I don't suppose you have any ideas on that, Diana.

DIANA
Well, what would you fellows say to an assassination? --

172. INT: THE LOBBY - UBS BUILDING - A FEW DAYS LATER - 6:00 P.M. 172.

Bustling and crowded. Long lines of PEOPLE, four abreast, roped off and waiting to get into the HOWARD BEALE show. Uniformed USHERS here and there, occasionally chatting with the waiting CROWD. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the network meeting just interrupted CONTINUE:

DIANA'S VOICE (Contd)
-- I think I can get the Mao Tse Tung people to kill Beale for us. As one of their programs. In fact, it'll make a hell of a kick-off show for the season. We're facing heavy opposition from the other networks on Wednesday nights, and the Mao Tse Tung Hour could use a sensational show for an opener. The whole thing would be done right on camera in the studio. We ought to get a fantastic look-in audience with the assassination of Howard Beale as our opening show --

173. INT: THE LOBBY - UBS BUILDING - ELEVATOR AREA 173.

-- as the waiting AUDIENCE is herded into the elevators. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the meeting CONTINUE:

AMUNDSEN'S VOICE
Well, if Beale dies, what would be our continuing obligation to the Beale corporation? I know our contract with Beale contains a buy-out clause triggered by his death or incapacity --

174. INT: UBS BUILDING - FOURTH FLOOR 174.

-- as the elevator load of AUDIENCE is led out of the elevator and down the long, carpeted corridors, past the large wall photographs of TV stars, glass-enclosed

control rooms, and other showpieces of the network's electronic glory. OVER THIS, the VOICES CONTINUE:

HACKETT'S VOICE
There must be a formula for the computation of the purchase price.

AMUNDSEN'S VOICE
Offhand, I think it was based on a multiple of 1975 earnings with the base period in 1975. I think it was fifty percent of salary plus twenty-five percent of the first year's profits --

175. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE 175.

The meeting is still going on --

AMUNDSEN (Contd)
(continuing above speech)
-- multiplied by the unexpired portion of the contract. I don't think the show has any substantial syndication value, would you say, Diana?

DIANA
Syndication profits are minimal.

THACKERAY
(mutters to DONNELLY)
Hey, we're not seriously going to kill him, are we?

DONNELLY
(mutters back)
I don't know, are we?

176. INT: THE BEALE SHOW STUDIO AND AUDIENCE AREA 176.

The new load of AUDIENCE finds seats in the rapidly-filling auditorium. On the floor of the studio, the CREW is setting the cameras, checking the booms. The stage curtain is down. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the meeting CONTINUE:

CHANEY'S VOICE
As Herb says, we're talking about a capital crime here, so the network can't be implicated.

AMUNDSEN'S VOICE
(chuckling)
I hope you don't have any hidden tape machines in this office, Frank --

177. INT: THE BEALE SHOW STUDIO - SHOWTIME 177.

The warmup is over; the stage footlights are on; the AUDIENCE sits expectantly. The big wall CLOCK shows: 6:29, clicks to 6:30. On the studio stage, the ANNOUNCER strides out from the wings, bellows happily at the audience --

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it -- how do you feel?

178. REVERSE SHOT of the AUDIENCE. Suddenly SPOT the GREAT AHMED KHAN and some of his FOLLOWERS, right in the middle, happily joining all the others in their communal response: 178.

AUDIENCE AND THE KHAN
We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take this any more!

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen! The Network News Hour! With Sybil the Sooth-sayer, Jim Webbing and his It's-the-Emmes-Truth Department, Miss Mata Hari, tonight another segment of Vox Populi, and starring --

MUSIC: A FLOURISH OF DRUMS

ANNOUNCER (Contd)
-- the mad prophet of the airways, Howard Beale!

MUSIC: A FULL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SOARS INTO AN IMPERIAL CRESCENDO --

179. -- as the HOUSELIGHTS go to BLACK. The curtain slowly rises. The bare stage, the stained glass window, the celestial SHAFT of light. HOWARD BEALE, in his black suit and tie, strides on from the wings, stands basking in the SPOTLIGHT. APPLAUSE UP. 179.

180. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE 180.

The meeting is still going on.

HACKETT
Well, the issue is: shall we kill Howard Beale or not. I'd like to hear some more opinions on that --

DIANA
I don't see we have any option, Frank. Let's kill the son of a bitch.

181. INT: THE BEALE STUDIO 181.

The APPLAUSE for HOWARD BEALE has died. HUSH -- suddenly, the HUSH is shattered by a HORRENDOUS ENFILADE of GUNFIRE. An embroidery of red bullet holes perforate HOWARD's shirt and jacket, and we might even see the impact of a head wound as he pitches backwards dead.

182. A BANK OF FOUR COLOR TELEVISION MONITORS 182.

It is 7:14 P.M., WEDNESDAY, July 9, 1975, and we are watching the network news programs on CBS, NBC, ABC and UBS-TV. The AUDIO is ON: headshots of WALTER CRONKITE, JOHN CHANCELLOR, HOWARD K. SMITH, HARRY REASONER, and JACK SNOWDEN, substituting for HOWARD BEALE, interspersed with tapes of the horrible happening at UBS the day before, flit and flicker across the four television screens. Television continues relentlessly on.

NARRATOR (OVER)
This was the story of Howard Beale who was the network news anchorman on UBS-TV, the first known instance of a man being killed because he had lousy ratings.

THE END